

## LEAVE ME MY HONOR

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Mrs. A.G. Kintzel



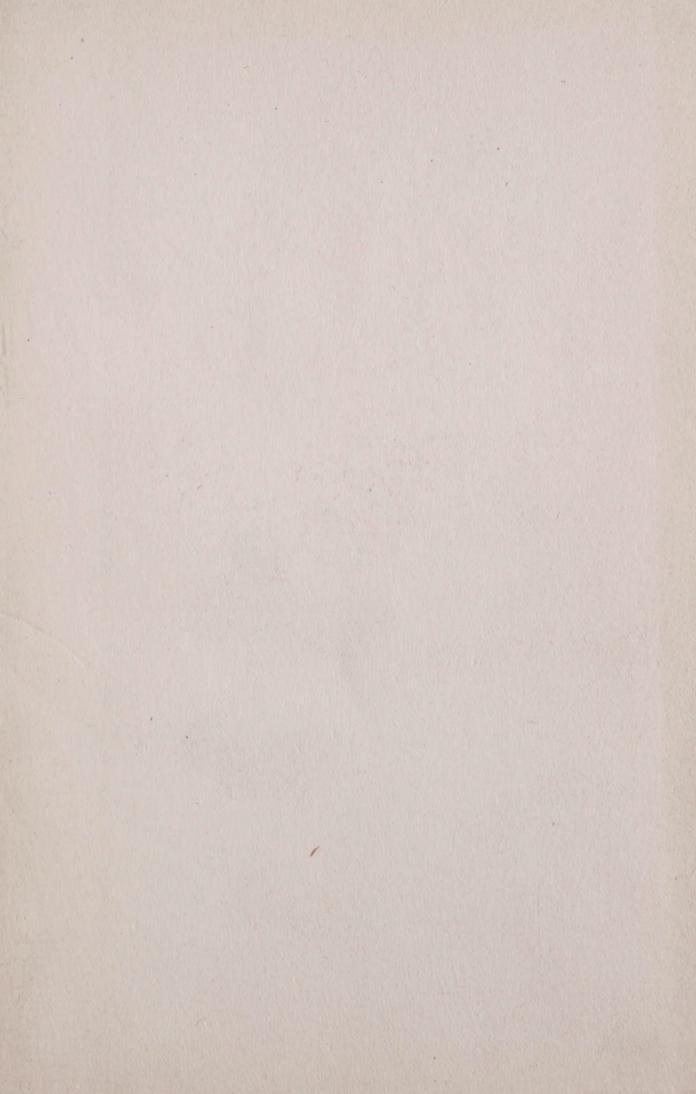


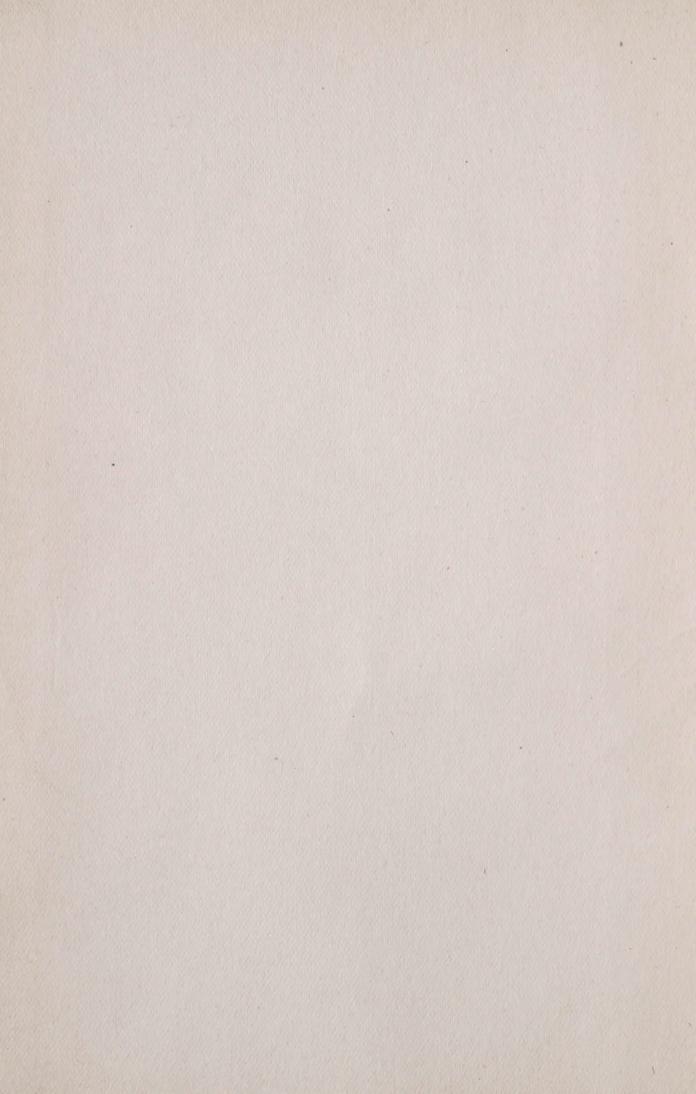
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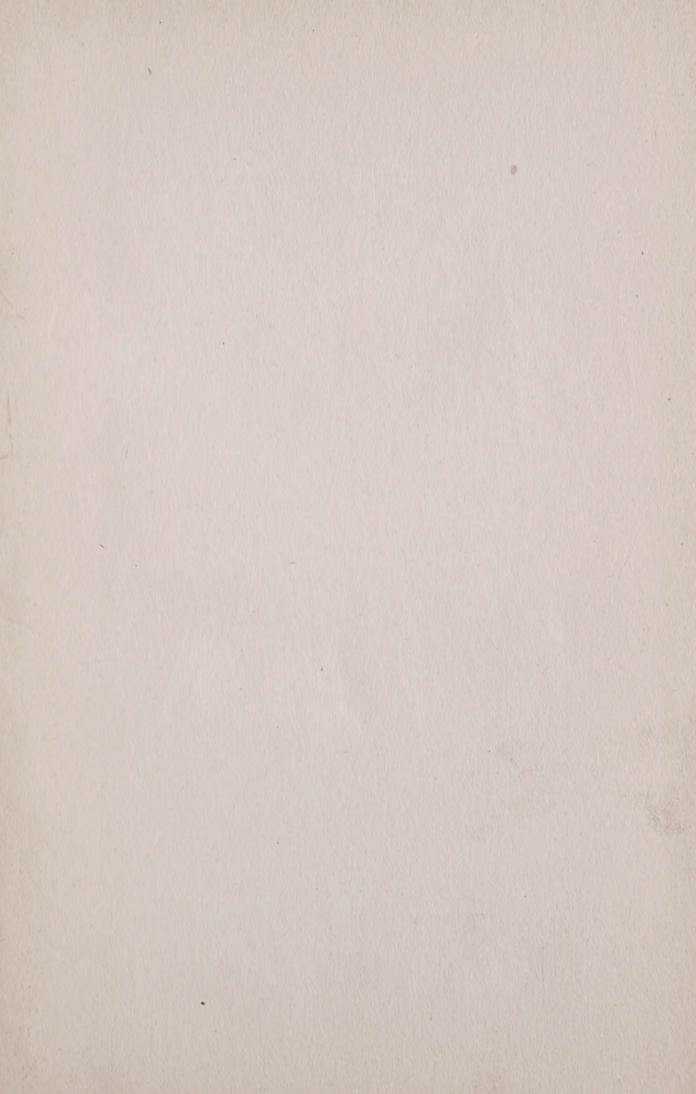
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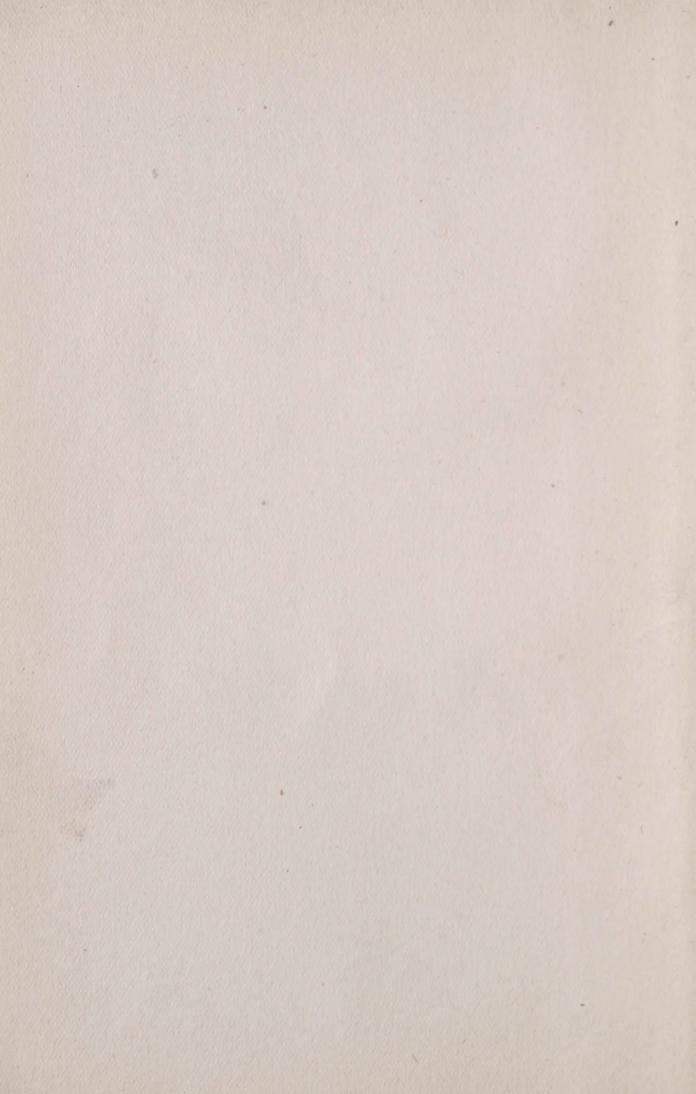
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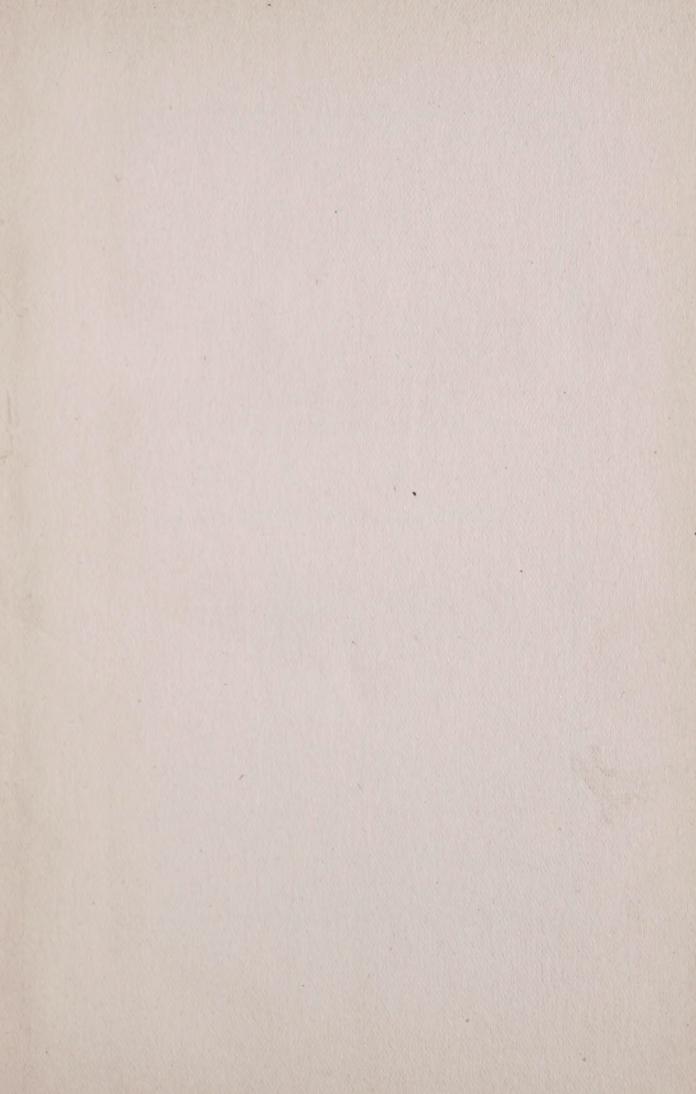
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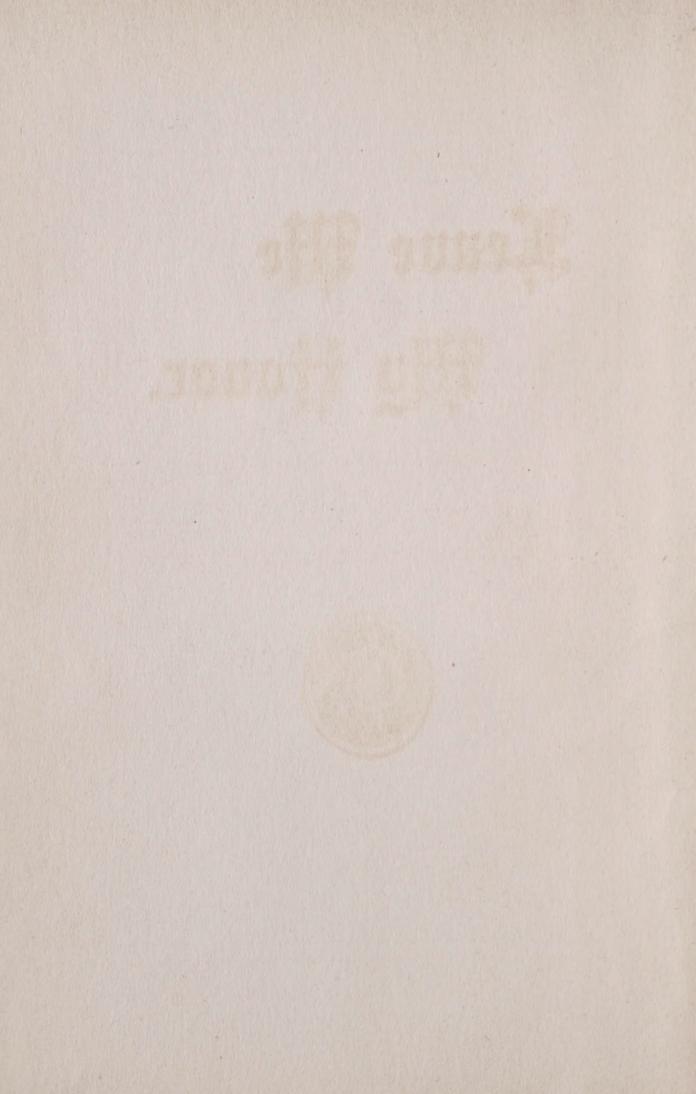












# Trave The Tour,

BY MRS. A. G. KINTZEL



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### LEAVE ME MY HONOR.

I.

LEAH WENTWORTH was called a beautiful woman.

All men and some women realized that she

was attractive to look upon.

Her hair, black as night, shone with remarkable lustre; in texture it was fine as silk and soft as satin, and her eyes were gray in the sunshine, blue in shadow—long eyes that brooded in repose and when animated proved searchlights of inquiry that challenged admiration with a daring

unequaled.

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Her complexion, ivory and carnation, always fresh and clear, owed nothing to art, and her nose was perfect, but her mouth was a trifle too large for the rest of her features, and the teeth it contained, though white, were uneven—that is, the eye teeth were double, showing a short prong at the top, and the back teeth were much shorter than the front ones, which gave to her mouth when she laughed a babyish expression of innocence, inexpressibly charming.

Her whole face, when Leah was quiet, expressed rare intelligence. When she was aroused

any expression might be read there, from heav-

enly kindliness to fiendish passion.

Tall and slender, with grace in every motion in truth a rare personality—and, withal, always daintily shod, bien coiffée, appetizing in all her

appointments.

She was married, when little more than a child to Ralph Wentworth, a rich broker, and had lived in luxurious ease, carelessly content, until, at the age of thirty-five, she fell in love with Dr.

Robert Russell, aged twenty-four.

He happened to be at that time in the hunting field at Radnor one day when she was thrown from her horse. In company with her almost distracted husband he had brought her home to Philadelphia, and had attended her for a wrenched ankle and a dislocated elbow—to the chagrin and annoyance of Dr. John Traynell, the family physician—who loved secretly the handsome Mrs. Wentworth.

Dr. Bob was a fresh, unspotted specimen of manhood for Leah to practice her arts upon, and when to all appearances the latter failed, she was compelled to acknowledge to herself, with deep humility and shame intolerable, that here was the one man, yet a mere boy, her co-equal in intellect, pure in principle, who commanded her respect and filled her heart.

He had inherited his practice from his father, Dr. Robert Russell, a noted surgeon, and though still so young, had won for himself renown in difficult operations, but fevers were his specialty. To them he devoted all the time he could spare from his regular professional duties—visiting the

hospitals in search of hopeless cases, studying out a cure for them, and oftentimes successfully. So that when Leah, for mere wantonness, tried to keep him from his beloved work, it angered him, and he spoke some very plain home truths to her.

It did not flatter his vanity at all when later she gave indication that he was more than a friend to her—he avoided her from that time.

This added fuel to the fire of Leah's passion, so intense had grown her penchant for the young doctor. She tried to conquer it, to hide it from herself, but she could not—nor from Dr. Traynell, who watched her with feline assiduity.

He, Dr. Traynell, would let her have her little play with Dr. Bob, and if, as was more than likely with a woman of that caliber, she got herself and the young man into serious trouble, why, he would pounce upon her and destroy her.

Leah was conscious of his persistent espionage, and one day when he had been called in by her husband for the heart ailment from which he suffered, she took occasion to waylay him in the hall and invite him into her sitting-room, where she could ask him a few questions.

The doctor was delighted. He loved this woman with every fibre of his being. To be in her presence at any and all times made his pulse best and his ever glisten

beat and his eyes glisten.

"How is Mr. Wentworth to-day, doctor?" was the first question Leal asked, after pointing him to a seat on the opposite side of a small table at which she had placed herself.

"About as usual," the doctor replied, "a little palpitation consequent upon the rise of certain

securities in the stock market—nothing to worry about. You, I see, are as well as ever. Dr. Bob has done his work thoroughly," he added, with a malicious side glance that annoyed her exceedingly and made the ivory forehead turn for a moment to flesh tint.

"Dr. Traynell," said Leah, her voice trembling with anger, "why do you feel called upon to watch my every action since my fall in the hunting field?"

"Do you really want an answer to that question? Had we not better waive the subject?"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Exactly what I say, my dear Mrs. Went-worth."

"But I do not understand you."
"That is your fault, not mine."

"Speak clearly, man!"

"Really? Do you insist upon it? You will not like what I am going to say."

"Speak!"

"Well—er, the reason of my careful observation of all your lovely doings is—excuse my plain speaking—is because you need watching by an old friend of the family such as I am, don't you know. I was Ralph Wentworth's friend before he married you, and would hate to see him made a fool of for—well, for Dr. Russell, we'll say. Not that he has the slightest notion at present—at present, I say—of harming or caring for anything that may belong to Ralph Wentworth. He thinks more of the most virulent case of typhus than he does of—we'll say you, Mrs. Wentworth, but you, my dear lady, you are leaving no stone

unturned to win his regard, to lure him from his fevers. Have I said enough?"

"Say on."

"Well—er, the game, as it stands, is lopsided, but you, you, Mrs. Wentworth, will never rest until it is more evenly balanced, and then—then there'll be fire, and we'll have to look out for the sparks. If you could be satisfied, now, to let that young man alone he would devote his life to fevers and lose it in the cause of humanity; but you will not. You will throw out your bait and angle with patience until you hook your fish. It will be very interesting to the onlooker—I shall quite enjoy it—but when it comes to the finish Ralph must take a hand in the game. How will you like that?"

"You have given me a glimpse of the cards in your hand, Dr. Traynell," she retorted, smiling. "You think the game is euchre, in which the knave is high when hearts are trumps; it is Old Sledge, however, that I am playing, and in that game, you know, the queen beats the knave."

"Yes," said the doctor, "and the king beats the queen. Ralph is the king in your game, but who is the ace? Ace is high, and sweeps all before it. Is Dr. Bob the ace? Do you hold him?"

"We'll see, Dr. Traynell. In the meantime, watch me with all your might, and when you have anything to report, take it to my husband. He will reward you appropriately. Good-morning, and don't forget that in Old Sledge you draw cards from the deck."

The doctor left the house with a puzzled frown. Leah went to her husband in his room. He was sitting up in bed, holding in his hand a tablet on which he was figuring, but which he

laid aside as soon as he saw her.

"I'm so glad you've come, Leah," he said. "I want to tell you of the immense sums of money I have cleared in the last few days. You shall have all the gew-gaws you may want, my pet, for whom have I but you to spend it upon? How imperially beautiful you are to-day, my love! 'Wentworth's Empress,' the fellows at the Bourse call you; and no wonder! You are supremely lovely now—handsomer, in fact, than on the day I married you eighteen years ago. That's right! Make yourself comfortable in the rocker, but move it close to the bed, so that I can kiss you when I want to. What brought you to me this morning?"

"Dr. Traynell."

"Dr. Traynell? What? Did he have the hardihood to alarm you about my condition? I am not seriously ill, Leah, but my heart does jump so when I hear either good news or bad. I'll not have him worry you; time enough when I am at the last gasp. Your life shall be nothing but sunshine—as it has been all along for eighteen years. Has it not, Leah?"

"It has, Ralph. You have made it very bright

for me."

"That was my aim from the beginning. From the day, Leah, when you stood beside me in bridal array and promised to love, honor and obey me, I have made it my business to keep things shining for you, and I have done it. Now I'm a bit tired, and we'll rest a while here at home, and then we'll go to New York, to Washington, perhaps, at Christmas, and to Europe again in the Spring. That will suit you, I suppose?"

"Yes, that will suit me. I shall enjoy going with you to all those places; but if, instead of going to New York and Washington, you prefer to

rest here, I shall be perfectly satisfied."

"That fellow has been filling your head with nonsense about the state of my health. I know it from your answer, and I shall sit on him properly if he does it again. By the way, how is Dr. Russell? I like that young fellow amazingly, and if Dr. Traynell can't obey orders, I'll give him a trial to see if he can."

"But Dr. Traynell is your old-time friend."

"Isn't he yours, too?"

"Ye-es."

"How you say that! As if you wanted me to think that the doctor is not your friend; that he does not like you. He does like you."

"I know it."

"Now, there you go again with your straightforward but enigmatical answer. Does he like you too well? Is that what your tone implies?"

No answer.

"Has he dared, the old fool, to raise his eyes to you? Answer."

"Watch him the next time you see him in my

company."

"I will. There goes the bell, and I suppose you must go down; but come to me to-night—yes?"

Leah promised, and when she was outside the

room rubbed one hand within the other in a pleased way as she said to herself: "I have drawn a card from the deck—a good trump card—but I don't like cards, and I won't think of them again."

#### II.

THE visitor proved to be Mrs. Stanhope, Leah's dearest friend and gossip. She had just come up from Atlantic City, where she had been on some business for her husband, a politician.

"I had to come and see you the moment I returned," she said with a loving kiss, settling herself in an easy chair near Leah. "I ran into Dr. Russell just as I was leaving the house, and he assured me that you had fully recovered the use of your ankle and arm; that your health was perfect, but I wanted to see for myself. And so you are well and hearty, the same old beautiful Leah. Positively, I believe that you are handsomer than when I last saw you. There's a new light in your eyes. What put it there, dear? Surely, not Dr. Bob Russell? You hang your head! Is it possible that you feel love's pangs and pleasures. and all in vain? My dear, my dear! Dr. Bob is wedded to fevers, and neither you nor any other woman will divorce him from his crazy love. Numbers have tried and failed. None as beautiful and experienced as you are, it is true; but you will go down with the rest. I feel sure of it! He will be at my conversazione to-morrow; you and Ralph are coming, and I will make an opportunity for you to have a chat alone with him if

you like. I always help along a flirtation, you know. But here I don't think it will come to anything."

"Is Dr. Traynell going to your conversazione?"

"Dr. Traynell? Yes; but what of him?"

"Arrange it so that he will be penned in a corner with Ralph and me for about a quarter of an hour. I want my husband to see how much the doctor admires me."

"My dear Leah, is it safe to do anything rash?"

"I think it is in this case. The doctor and I are playing a game of Old Sledge. Hearts are trumps; we have both played and captured a trick, and each has drawn a card from the deck. The king of hearts came to me. The doctor drew an ace, but not the ace of hearts."

"Well, if you hold the deuce of hearts in your hand, you can trump his ace with it and keep

your king. Do you hold it?"

"Do I hold you?"

"To the finish. It is high, low, jack and the

game, isn't it?"

"Yes; but, oh, why do I revert to the cards? I hate them! Give me half an hour alone with Dr. Bob to-morrow night. It will be difficult. He avoids me."

"Ah, is it so? Then you have not been wise, Leah. With all your experience of men's hearts and manners, you have been as egregiously foolish as any untried young maiden. You have let him see into your mind, my friend, and thus blasted all your hopes."

"Not quite so bad as that, Mabel. I gave him

a look; no other sign."

"But that look did it; it angered him; he avoids

vou."

"That look may have done it, as you so elegantly express it, in another way. It may have shown him his own heart—it may haunt him—

he may be afraid to meet me."

"Well, flatter yourself that way if you like. I'll give you the half hour. Good-bye, dear. Give my kindest regards to your husband. Mine, by the way, is in high feather. I have brought him back important news."

At the conversazione things were so arranged, early in the evening, that Mr. and Mrs. Wentworth sat together in a cozy corner facing Dr. Traynell, who was resting on a pile of cushions.

Never for a moment did his eyes wander from Leah—not even when Ralph addressed him pointedly—and he plainly showed his admiration for the beautiful woman before him. Ralph felt as though he would like to throttle his old friend; then his better judgment prevailed; but he at once came to the conclusion that he would no longer require Dr. Traynell's professional services: that he could no longer trust him.

Presently the doctor's gaze grew so intensely, cruelly watchful that it made Ralph feel sick. "Let us get out of this hot corner," he said to Leah. "I see Dr. Russell standing in the door of the conservatory, and wish to ask him for something to quiet the loud thumping of my heart. He may have some sedative with him. It has excited me above everything to see that fellow watching you. He can't help admiring you, I

suppose; but he must stop watching you or I'll

know the reason why!"

Dr. Bob had a soothing powder which he gave to Mr. Wentworth, and made him lie down on a couch in the host's morning-room. "In half an hour you will be better," he said to him, "if you'll stay here and keep quiet."

"Well, look after my wife in the meantime. I don't want to spoil her pleasure by making her stay here with me. Don't think I could rest with

that on my conscience."

"You must have rest and quiet now, Wentworth," the doctor urged. "I will take

charge of your wife."

So fate decreed that these two should be together for thirty minutes, and, thanks to Mrs. Stanhope's strategical handling of her other guests, they were alone in the conservatory.

The doctor led Leah to a seat near the palms, and stood before her waiting for her to speak; but she speke not, only looked at him until his discomfort grew so great, his anger so hot, that

he smothered a curse in his throat.

Soon Leah's eyes overflowed; big drops rolled

down her cheeks.

"Stop that!" he said, roughly. "I know why you weep," and, stepping behind a palm so that she could no longer see him, he stayed there until the half-hour was up. Then he offered her his arm and led her back to her husband, but not before he had pulled out a handkerchief from his pocket and dabbed the tears from her cheeks with it with a matter-of-fact thoroughness bordering on roughness.

What could Leah do but smile when she saw him stuff the wet handkerchief into his breast instead of returning it to the hip pocket whence it had come.

Dr. Traynell saw the smile and saw the younger physician bend over Ralph Wentworth with a medicine vial in his hand.

He did not dream that his eyes had betraved his heart nor could he guess through what agency Ralph Wentworth had become suddenly sharpsighted. He approached Mrs. Stanhope. "Do you know why Ralph Wentworth takes Dr. Russell's medicine to-night instead of mine?" he asked, when she was for a moment alone.

"Yes, I do," she answered. "He would have been foolish to have taken your medicine to-

night."

"Why?"

"Oh, take another card from the pack," she smiled, as she sailed away on the arm of a literary lion.

"That woman has been taken into Leah's confidence. She knows what I said to her yesterday," the doctor said to himself. "She is Leah's friend. Well, Wentworth is my friend, even if he did take Dr. Bob's medicine. But what made him do that? I will call there to-morrow and find out."

Which he did.

A very cool "Good-morning!" answered his own pleasant greeting as he stood before the man he claimed as a friend.

He sat down and put the tips of his fingers to-

gether as he looked the question he feared to ask.
Ralph Wentworth answered the look by asking at once:

"What did you mean, sir, by eyeing my wife as you did last night? Admiration was in your gaze at first. I forgive you that—but when you began to watch her, man, you turned me sick, absolutely sick with apprehension."

"Don't get excited, Ralph," the doctor said calmly, though his breath came and went quickly and his eyes glittered ominously. "It is not good

for you."

"Damn the good! Why did you watch her?"

"Because she needed watching, Ralph."

"Needed watching? My Leah? Ha! ha! Was not I there to watch her?"

"You were; but you are blind as a bat where

she is concerned."

"Gad, man, you don't like her, after all! She gave me that impression once yesterday, and then again, she almost told me that you liked her too well."

"She did? Then that accounts for your cool treatment of me to-day and for Dr. Russell's services to you last night. Your wife, Ralph, is fathoms deep in love with your new physician; watch her eyes as you did mine last night, and they will prove my words true if they rest on him. I admire your wife—always did, and—I can't help it, Ralph. But I love her, and, were she similarly inclined toward me, would rob you of her. This is very plain speaking, but you will have it so. I love her so well I would put you out of the road in a jiffy if I had the ghost of a

show with her! But I haven't, and you are safe from me. Russell, however, is also a doctor, and Leah loves him."

"Does he love Leah?" Ralph Wentworth broke

in.

"He does not at present, but he will if you do not take her out of his path. Your wife is a woman of rare intellect with which to charm any man—a consummate actress, to deceive him; dominated by passion inordinate, calculated to win response. She will hold his heart in the end, and, if she does, how will it be with you, my friend? You cannot call for Dr. Russell's professional services now that I have opened your eyes. Mine, I know, will no longer be in demand here."

"You are right, John Traynell. I am done with you forever. You must never again enter my house-you-you scoundrel! fiend! whom I called friend. You would not only rob me of my wife if you could, but would make her life a misery to her. She shall not be miserable, I tell you! Keep your eyes from her, you tiger!—that would seize my Leah, my little lamb, with your cruel paws, and crunch her bones with your teeth! You shall trouble her no more. Let her complain to me but once that you are watching her, and I throw broadcast the words vou uttered to me in this room. Don't come near me. There are two detectives behind you who have heard our conversation. They heard you say in cold blood that you would not let my life stand in your way if you had any chance with my wife. That would be an ugly report to spread about Dr. Traynell, don't you think?"

Traynell cast a look behind him and then muttered: "I will never trouble you or her again,

Ralph."

"See that you keep your word. Her life shall be bright. I have said it. She shall have sunshine, even from my grave."

#### III.

HE rested a while after the doctor and the detectives were gone. Then he sought Leah in her boudoir—a charming room, all rose and silver, in which he had spent many happy hours with her.

She was not there when he entered but came

at his summons.

He drew her on his knee and pressed her to him, and his eyes moistened as he looked at her face and saw a new expression there. It bespoke nothing for him. He could not conjure up the brooding passion which it told of. He had not the power—but neither had she, according to Dr. Traynell. Not yet did Dr. Russell love her, but he was young—much younger than Leah, though wisdom made him older-and youth was impressionable. He would learn to love her, and it would be a pure love, in spite of the fact that she was married, for he read Dr. Bob aright. knew sinful passion would be torn from his heart by the roots. He would see them together. He, the dying man, who owned Leah and loved her, and who must make her happy even from the grave.

Leah's eyes were closed as she rested in her husband's arms, and she did not see his look, but she felt the tenderness of the kiss he pressed upon her lips; and, returning it, she nestled closer and threw her arms about his neck. She was accustomed to having him act the lover in this boudoir, and his affectionate ways pleased her.

"I dismissed Dr. Traynell this morning," Ralph

said in a little while.

Leah sat up. "Dismissed him?" she said. "For looking love at me last night? Why, Ralph, many men have looked love at me, often to your amusement."

"I know that, love. We have often laughed together at the moths that would flutter to the candle and get their wings singed. It was cruel sport, I will acknowledge, but such things must be; and the fellow who looks love or acts love to another man's wife deserves to get burned. does him good in the end; it teaches him that a woman may be virtuous though she be a married flirt. Married flirts have their uses, but, Leah, Dr. Traynell not only showed in his eyes the love he bears you; he watched you as no man must watch my wife. I told him so, and dismissed him; and in the future I would like you to avoid him, yet not so markedly as to provoke comment. Leah, Leah, if you should get into that man's power! If he knew what we must not even whisper to ourselves! Oh, Leah, be careful. Let him never get a hold on you."

Leah grew restless, and got up and walked

about the room.

"Ralph," she said, returning to his knee, "there is trouble coming to us. Twice yesterday I spoke of cards—think of it, Ralph—cards!"

"S-h-h-h, my dear, not so loud—the walls may

have ears," Ralph said in a voice not much above a whisper. "We have kept it hidden—that past life—none know of it except the Stanhopes. They are true as steel; but if ever a hint gets to Dr. Traynell, it will be bad for you, Leah."

"And not for you?"

"Oh, yes, for me, too; but I—— Have you any more of the powders Dr. Bob left for me?"

"No, Ralph, you took them all. You take a great deal of medicine lately. Is your heart getting worse? You are surely not going to die and leave me, Ralph? I couldn't do without you, you know, after having had you for eighteen years! Have I been a good wife to you, Ralph, in all that time?"

"You have been good and true, Leah, since the day three men offered you their hearts and fortunes and you chose me. The other two were handsomer, younger, richer, better—"

"No, Ralph; not better."

"That's what you said then: 'I will take Ralph Wentworth for my husband, because he is the best of the lot. He will make my life bright and happy.' Have I succeeded in doing that, Leah?"

"Yes, oh, yes, Ralph, you have."

"And in all that long time, my wife, you have not learned to love me." Very sadly Ralph Wentworth spoke these words, and Leah hung her head.

"I do not mean to reproach you," he went on, "but I do think it is wonderful that in eighteen years no man—neither I nor any other—has touched your heart. How I wish I had one of those powders! But the doctor is coming to-day.

He said he would. That must be his ring now. Come down with me, Leah, to see him. I like him so much. He is a fine fellow—a true type of

noble manhood."

"I will join you presently, Ralph," said Leah, "when I am a little more presentable, for," she added with a smile, "my boudoir gallant manages to rumple me up considerably when he calls on me."

Ralph went to the drawing-room, where Dr.

Russell was awaiting him.

"I was greatly surprised last night," said the doctor, "when you requested my services. Dr. Traynell is considered high in the profession in all diseases of the heart, while I am but a raw recruit in the handling of that organ. Fevers are my specialty, you know."

"Yes, I know; but for personal reasons I have lost faith in Dr. Traynell, and you will study my case, I am sure, and do what you can for me. I

have faith in you, Dr. Russell."

Leah, much to the surprise of Dr. Bob, walked

in at this point.

He greeted her politely and went on with the examination of her husband's pulse, and then to

prescribe for him.

Leah glanced wistfully at him. He raised his eyes suddenly and caught her look. None of this was lost on Ralph; neither was the impatient frown that darkened the doctor's forehead immediately after nor the pensive droop of Leah's lips and the quivering breath that hid a sigh.

"I can see that she loves him," he thought, "and that he knows it. The knowledge frets and

angers him. He does not hate her, that is evident; but if she ever does win his love he will cut his heart out rather than let her know it. He is a man. She would be safe with him. He would give her sunshine—and, ah! the beams would be glorified."

"You will not want me any longer, will you, Ralph?" Leah said when the doctor was gone. "I am going to call on Mabel—or would you like

me to drive with you?"

"If you would be so kind, love. Somehow, I feel inclined to be selfish to-day. I can't bear to

have you out of my sight for a minute."

She left him, and Ralph went to the library and took up a book, but he could not concentrate his mind on what he was reading. He discarded the book and tried a paper, with no better result; not even the stock page could hold his attention. So the paper went the way of the book, and Ralph leaned back in his chair and gave himself up to thought until he heard the bell, and Mabel Stanhope made her appearance.

"Do not disturb yourself," she said. "I came in directly the servant told me you were here alone. Mason Worrell lies dying at the Continental, and he wants to see Leah. Leah, of all others. Oh, Ralph, after all these years! He sent for my husband and told him to bring her to him, as he could not die without seeing her once more. What is to be done, Ralph? She was to come to me to-day, but I wanted to see you first."

"Mason Worrell—the man who shot—"

"Yes; and why he wants to see her I cannot imagine. Will you allow her to go to him, or

shall we say nothing to her about it, and let him

die as best he may?"

"She shall go to this man if she so elects when she hears his request. Luncheon will be on immediately. You must stay and take it with us, and afterward accompany us, perhaps, to Worrell's bedside. Leah said there would be trouble coming. She mentioned cards twice lately."

"So she did—in connection with Dr. Tray-

nell."

"I have discharged him, Mabel, in favor of Dr. Russell."

Mabel looked at him but said nothing. luncheon bell was ringing. She hastily removed her wraps, and surprised Leah with a kiss as she came in for her husband.

"I'm glad you came, dear," said Leah. "Ralph and I are going for a drive, and I could not have called on you. But what brought you here?"

"I will tell you after luncheon," said Mabel.

"I want to do it full justice first."

"I'm hungry, too," Ralph put in, "and, seeing us two ravenous, ought to make you feel the same way."

"Oh, my appetite is always good," she an-

swered.

After luncheon Mabel followed Leah to her

room, and there told her her errand.

"Mason Worrell dying!" gasped Leah. "And wishing to see me! What does he want of meof me, after all these years? Does Ralph know?"

"Yes, I told him before you came down."

"What does he say? Does he want me to go?"

"He leaves it entirely to you."

"Then I will go. Once more I will look on the man who—who—oh, God! will I ever forget that night?"

"Do not think of it, Leah, but get ready, and I will accompany you. He desired Max to bring

you, but Ralph says he is going with us."

"I knew-I knew there would be trouble when

cards came into my mind."

"Nonsense, Leah! You are childishly superstitious on that point. There will be no trouble. The man is dying full of remorse—that is all—and he wishes to ask your forgiveness. I would snap my fingers at the whole affair if he had any other physician than Dr. Traynell. 'Do you know why Mr. Wentworth takes Dr. Russell's medicine instead of mine to-night?' Traynell asked me last night."

"And you answered?"

"I answered, 'Yes, I know.' 'Why?' he repeated, and I said, 'Oh, draw another card from the deck!'"

"Cards again!" sighed Leah, as she took up

her gloves.

#### IV.

Arrived at the hotel, they were told the sick man insisted on seeing Mrs. Wentworth alone.

Leah followed the servant to the room, and found Dr. Traynell bending above the man she recognized at a glance as Mason Worrell. That was his head, heavy and broad; the features, strong, large, irregular; the eyes, gray-blue, shrewd, wondrously intelligent; the brow, strong, showing eloquence; the mouth, full and sensual and cruel.

"Is that man," nodding toward the doctor, "to be a witness to any conversation that may take place between us?" she asked, the storm within her heart reflecting itself on her countenance.

"No, Leah," the man gently replied. "Withdraw, sir," she commanded.

Dr. Traynell showed his teeth and withdrew out of sight, but not entirely out of hearing. He took care to leave the door by which he made his exit unlatched.

Leah drew the heavy curtains across it without noticing that it was not closed, and so the doctor could hear her words when excitement caused her to raise her voice, but not the low tones of the invalid. Once only the dying man spoke aloud, and then the listener heard what he said.

"My husband is in the house," Leah said, as she took a seat by the bedside. "Ralph Wentworth, you know. He was there at that time."

"He was one of the three-"

"Yes; may he come in?"

"No; my words are for your ear alone. You are still beautiful, Leah, beautiful—beautiful as

you were at that time, when-"

"When you shot down my father in cold blood before me, because, as you claimed, he cheated at cards. Leave my beauty out of the question, Mason Worrell, and say what you have to say briefly. I have not much time to spare you. You accused my white-haired old father of cheating you-you, to whom he lost all his money and would have lost his daughter, too, had not three brave men decided otherwise. Oh, it all comes before me again when I see you lying there—the room in that lawless place, the rude curtains drawn across the windows, the flickering lamp on the table, around which you and my father and three others sat, while I leaned over his shoulder. You fleeced him, and when he could no longer play, because he had nothing more to stake, you said: 'Stake Leah!' But the others objected to the human stake, and then you said: 'Stake the ring on her finger.' I pulled it off. The play went on, and when luck for once came my father's way, you said he cheated, and pulled out a revolver and shot him—shot him down! and he fell at my feet. 'I did not cheat,' he said as he fell. But the cards still in his hand proved otherwise—so said you and the others. Oh, Mason Worrell, as I see you lying before me, I feel such rage rising within

me that I could kill you-kill you!-fiend incarnate!—as you killed my poor old father!"

And, so saying, she struck him in the face with

her clenched first.

The dying man raised himself by great effort. "Leah! Leah!" he said, "I am dying."

"I see that, and I regret striking you. But why did you say that old man cheated? He did not cheat, Mason Worrell! I would take his dying word against the world. Why did you prove him a cheat?"

"Because I loved you, Leah. I thought you would come to me when you found yourself all alone in the world, with that stain on your father's name-glad to hide your shame with me

when you were helpless."

"You did not think of the others, it seems. They loved me, too, Mason Worrell. Each one of those three brave, true men laid his heart and his fortune at my feet over my dead father's body, as you know, and I took Ralph Wentworth. And you, Mason Worrell, were powerless. They told you-those three did-that if you ever breathed anywhere that my father cheated at cards they would take the law into their hands as you did-as you did, inhuman wretch-as you did! You shot him down before me; and now. what do you want with me, after eighteen years? Why did you send for me?"

"Because I wanted to tell you my story and to

beg your forgiveness."

'My forgiveness? I forgive you for killing my father? Never! But your story may be interesting."

With dilated nostrils and glaring eyes she leaned forward, anxiety, fear, suspense, uncer-

tainty in every feature.

"My story starts from the time I met you, Leah," Worrell began. "I loved you from the first moment. It was in that far Western town where your father lost his little all to me. He had the gambling fever. Even you he would have gambled away had it not been for the others, you must acknowledge. How we came to your humble lodgings night after night—I and the others—to play with your father, ostensibly—to see you, in reality—you know; but you do not know of the many schemes I laid to get you into my power. I did not succeed. Not even at the last, when I made it appear that the Colonel cheated—"

"Made it appear—made it appear that he cheated! Oh, God, I thank thee! He did not cheat! My father did not cheat at cards! And you—you killed him! He did not cheat! Let me call Ralph! He must know that my father was an

honest man to the end."

"Stay! If you call him in I will say no more. It will be your word against mine, as it has been all along."

"Say it again, Mason Worrell—say that you made it appear—say that he did not cheat. Say it

out loud! It is music to my ears!"

"Your father did not cheat at cards, Leah. I made it appear so to the others by sleight-of-hand," Worrell repeated, loud enough for Dr. Traynell's ear, and then he sank back on his pillows and continued: "I sent for you to tell you this. I knew how your proud spirit suffered. I

suffered, too, Leah; beautiful Leah, I suffered, too. And now I want your forgiveness. I long to have you clasp my hand just once, Leah, and say: 'Mason Worrell, I forgive you, as I hope to be forgiven.'"

"Will you clear my father's name from the shame you cast upon it if I consent to do that?"

"No, I'll not! That would be blackening my own. As you know, I have made myself a name second to none in my sphere of life. It must not be dishonored."

"While my father, who served his country and made a record for himself in the field, must rest in his grave a dishonorable cheat. You want my forgiveness. I give it to you thus, and thus, and thus!" And with Dr. Traynell's cane, which had been left standing beside the bed, she struck the dying man thrice across the face and left him.

Dr. Traynell, on hearing her retiring, stepped into another room, and when she was downstairs hurried back to his patient, whom he found gasping for breath, with three ugly red marks on his

face.

Not another word spoke he, in spite of all the doctor's care and attention in the two days he yet

lingered.

And when he was dead a careful search of his effects revealed nothing more to the doctor concerning the story of which he had caught a few sentences.

The words he had overheard from Leah's lips were: "Stake Leah . . . you said he cheated . . . shot him down . . . kill you, kill you, fiend incarnate, as you killed my father

. . . and you, Mason Worrell, were power-less. . . You shot him down before me, and now what do you want with me, after eighteen years?" And, in addition, Worrell's all-important admission: "Your father did not cheat at cards, Leah. I made it appear so to the others by sleight-of-hand."

And he carefully wrote down every word in

his memorandum-book.

Leah, when she rejoined Ralph and Mabel, was

livid with passion.

At her request, they took her home instantly. On reaching there she desired Mabel to come and see her the following day, and she no sooner found herself alone with her husband than she threw herself on the floor at his feet, a prey to such a paroxysm of passion and grief as Ralph hoped

never to witness again.

"I struck him, Ralph," she said; "struck Mason Worrell across the face with a heavy cane. I hope I killed him. He—oh, Ralph!" and here she wept aloud. "He made it appear to you and the others, by a sleight-of-hand trick, that my father, my dear, old, white-haired, honorable father, cheated at cards—and he wanted my forgiveness! I gave it to him. Ha! ha! ha! 'I long to have you clasp my hand just once, Leah, and say, "Mason Worrell, I forgive you as I hope to be forgiven," he said to me. 'Will you clear my father's name before witnesses if I do that?' I asked. And he answered, 'No, I'll not! That would be blackening my own. You know I have made myself a name second to none in my sphere of life. It must not be dishonored.' When he

said that I thought of my father, shot down by that wretch, lying dishonored in his grave, and fury seized me. I must strike him; and I did. For eighteen years, Ralph, it has been my bitter portion to carry about with me wherever I went the knowledge that you and two others held my father guilty of the mean act for which men were shot down like dogs in those days, beyond the Rockies. But I knew he was innocent. Worrell knew it, too, and to-day he acknowledged to me that he shot my father because he thought I would be glad, in my lonely helplessness, to take refuge in his arms; for he loved me. He did not dream there were three other men who would have been willing to take the lonely, shamestricken orphan to their hearth and home. No: he counted you out—and found out his mistake. The shame, Ralph, has been in my heart for eighteen long years—yet he would not, even on his deathbed, take it publicly from me. And he, the Hon. Mason Worrell, was beaten with a cane, like any other cur! Ha! ha! Like any other cur!"

And with one last hysterical laugh the poor woman sank in a swoon, utterly exhausted.

Ralph hastily sent for Dr. Russell.

The latter's gentle words failed to make her raise her eyes toward him, but she took the medicine he prepared for her, and shortly after went to sleep, to the great relief of her husband, whose concern for her condition was only equaled by the alarm he felt at the tale she had brought him.

He sent a trusty messenger to the Continental

for news of Mason Worrell, and when he found that he was still living but speechless, he thanked God in his heart and prayed that he might remain speechless to the end—and so it happened.

## V.

LEAH did not awaken until late next morning, and she looked so thoroughly refreshed and seemed to enjoy her breakfast so heartily that her husband did not hesitate to ask her for a fuller

account of her visit to Mason Worrell.

"I have ascertained that the wretch is still alive," he said, with a sigh, when she had concluded her pathetic story, "alive but speechless, and Dr. Traynell is with him. Let us pray that he may never regain his speech. He might wreak vengeance upon you for those blows by proclaiming to the world your father's story, as he chooses to tell it, and Dr. Traynell would prove a willing aid to him."

Leah wept. "It would be a fine thing, wouldn't it," she sobbed, "to have people saying, 'There goes Mrs. Wentworth, whose father—whom she never mentions, by the way—was a gambler and a cheat."

"Never mind that, love, you are Mrs. Wentworth, you know, my own sweet wife, and your

husband's name is stainless."

"Yes, I know, Ralph, but the injustice of it! That man, that murderer, that inhuman fiend honored—my father, the high-minded, true gentleman, dishonored!"

"Let us drop the subject, Leah, you are excit-

ing yourself uselessly. Get yourself ready and go out, but not to Mabel's. I am going there after I have attended to some business at my office, and will tell them what occurred yesterday. would excite you too much. Dr. Bob is not coming to-day."

"Was he here last night?"

"Yes, he came in a little before twelve to exam-There is a true gentleman, Leah, I like him so much."

"So do I like him," she said, "but he is always rather rude and rough with me. I attempted a flirtation with him, Ralph, and it made him wild. Even my tears had no effect on him, though he mopped them off my face with a big linen handkerchief, which he pulled out of his hip pocket, and then stuffed into his breast, tears and all."

Ralph laughed loud. She was only trying to amuse herself with the young doctor, and her heart was not touched, he thought. Yet-he had seen the wistful look, and it spoke of passionate longing and suffering. "Little wife," he said, "if anything happened to me suddenly, and you needed a strong arm to lean on, I would like you to take Dr. Bob's. Always remember that."

"If anything happened to you suddenly? What do you mean? Did he say you were seriously ill? Oh, I mentioned the cards more than once; is there more trouble coming to me? Oh, do not die

and leave me!"

"Be calm, dear, I am not going to die till my time comes."

"I could not bear to lose you, Ralph, we have been such close friends, such true comrades for eighteen years, and you have been so kind and loving to me, always, my husband."

"Yes, love, and you have been kind to me, you

have let me into your heart a little way-"

"Though not all the way. That is how you were going to finish your sentence, I know. It is sad. I have read of the passion you want, and I feel that I could love just like that. If there had been children, it might have been different, but none came to us. As it is, I love you very dearly, Ralph."

"Well, go out now, and get the cobwebs out of your mind. We have been quite too sentimental for an old married couple. Kiss me and let me

go."

"I wonder why he said that," she thought when he was gone. "'If anything happened to me suddenly'—oh, I must know what occurred here last night. I will go to the doctor's, he shall tell me."

She rang for her maid, and in a few moments she was being driven rapidly in the direction of

Dr. Russell's office.

She found him in and plunged at once into the business that brought her. "You were with my husband last night, you examined him," she said. "Is his heart seriously affected? Tell me."

"Did Mr. Wentworth send you here?" he re-

joined.

"No, but he said something to me this morning which made me think that perhaps he was slowly dying before me, and I wanted to know if such were the fact."

Dr. Bob said nothing. He looked down and played with the masonic insignia on his watch fob.

"It is true, then? Oh, Dr. Russell, save him for me. You are skilful, save him, I cannot, cannot

give up Ralph!"

"Quiet yourself, Mrs. Wentworth," said the doctor at last, "your husband is not seriously ill, that is, there is no immediate danger. He has heart disease, but if he is careful, he may live to a great age. His future good health depends largely upon his own conduct, his discretion, his perseverance, as I told him last night."

"Can you look me in the face, Dr. Bob, and tell me that my husband is not going to die sud-

denly?"

"I cannot say that, Mrs. Wentworth, he is in God's hands. Keep his mind free from care and worry; he was greatly disturbed last night. Are you feeling well, yourself, to-day? Let me feel your pulse."

She bared her wrist for him, and he took the soft round arm in his hand. How beautiful it was, how soft and white,—he dropped it suddenly as if it were a coal of fire, and bit his lip and

frowned.

"Go home and rest," he said, "and have some cheerful companion with you. You are not fit to be out to-day, nor fit to be in your room alone. Don't worry about your husband, look cheerfully on everything, everything."

He followed her to the door and with his hand on her shoulder, his kind eyes looking into hers, he said once more, "Do not worry about anything,

Mrs. Wentworth."

Who should be passing by, as she reached the sidewalk, but Max Stanhope.

"Can you come with me for a short drive, Max?" she said.

"Yes," he answered, "I can give you an hour if

you like."

"Come on, then."

"Why, what's the trouble, dear Leah," he asked, as she burst into tears as soon as he had seated himself beside her in her carriage.

"Have you heard about Mason Worrell?"

"About his being in a dying condition at the Continental, do you mean? Yes, the papers are full of it."

"What do they say?"

"Oh, chiefly that Dr. Traynell is with him and that he is not expected to live the day out, and they give a sketch of his career."

"Do they say nothing about the caning he re-

ceived?"

"No, Leah; what caning?"

"You did not see Ralph to-day, then?"

"No, I left the house this morning early and have not been there since. I was on my way home when I met you."

"I beat him across the face with a cane, yester-

day, Max."

"You, Leah?"

"Yes, he sent for me to ask forgiveness of me for murdering my father and branding him a cheat. He acknowledged to me that he made it appear to you three by a sleight-of-hand trick that my father cheated."

"Is it possible! Many a time I did think, Leah, that Colonel Emmet, that fine old gentleman, your father, could not have been guilty of that act—yet

—he had the gambling fever and would have staked you, his only child. That made me hard in my judgment of him. But Mason Worrell—the Honorable Mason Worrell—to acknowledge that he tricked us and deliberately murdered your father before our eyes! Was any one near when he told you? Dr. Traynell, perhaps?"

"No, we were alone, and he would not even let

me call Ralph in to hear him say that."

"The cowardly cur! He sent a note to me, you know, telling me that he was at the Continental, dying, and asking me to bring you to his bed-side. Mabel thought it better to tell Ralph first. Do you think more trouble will come of this, Leah? You may count on my friendship always, you know."

"Yes, I know, Max, but it is not Mason Worrell that is causing me most anxiety, it is Ralph.

Max, he will die and leave me."

"Nonsense. He will die when his time comes, of course, like the rest of us, but he is well enough, barring a little trouble with his heart. You women are so foolish; you butterflies of fashion, especially. You marry us and tell us you have no heart to give us, and flirt outrageously with all the young men in your reach, and when we have a pain or ache, you weep and worry about us, your cold-blooded assertion and giddy conduct to the contrary. I know it. Mabel does the same thing. When I married her fourteen years ago, she told me she would take me but had no love to give me—I must be a strangely unlovable man; you could not love me either, Leah—and here, not long ago, when I was in that railway col-

lision and had a little bark peeled off the back of my hand, she went on terribly about it, just when she was in the thick of her flirtation with that lumbering giant of a millionaire's son, whom she shipped to Europe. I felt pretty miserable at that time, Leah; thought she was going to claim from me what I told her she might have if ever she learned to love another man, her freedom. was our bargain, you know, for me to step down and out whenever she asked me. But she didn't. She put a flea in his ear instead, and he went abroad. Oh, you married flirts; how you draw them on, the young softies who have no conception of the word 'honor,' and let them flutter about you, squeeze your hands and kiss you, perhaps! But when it comes to facing dishonor with them, ninety per cent. of you cry halt, even those of you who are actually in love with the other man. As Ralph said to me not long ago, 'That man's honor is safe who has a flirt for a wife.' Women love to play with fire, married ones especially, but they handle the coals carefully and seldom get burned. Now I have succeeded in making you laugh, I see."

"You have driven away the vapors, Max, and I feel better and brighter, as I always do after having been with you—and don't run away with the idea that you are not a lovable man, just because Mabel says that, and because I chose

Ralph."

"Yes, but if it won't bring me what I have been trying to win for fourteen years, my wife's heart—I guess we can't have everything in this world all at once: and when she's old and wrinkled and toothless, perhaps she'll have to turn

to me; there'll be nobody else."

"Just imagine Mabel wrinkled and toothless, turning to you, another old fogy!" broke in Leah, with a laugh. "But we are getting old, Max, all the same. Here I am thirty-five years old already."

"And I'm thirty-nine, a tender spring chicken. Say, if you've had enough of me, I'll jump out," and he jumped out without waiting for the car-

riage to come to a full stop.

A few minutes later his wife was relating to him all that Ralph Wentworth had just com-

municated to her.

He heard it all without comment, and then told her in his turn how he had met Leah in front of Dr. Bob's house and had succeeded in brightening her up a bit. "She was very doleful," he said, "crying miserably, and not because of the Worrell affair, but because she was afraid Ralph was going to die and leave her. I wonder, now, whether my wife would worry if I had heart disease, my wife who is just now a picture of comfort and as beautiful as an old painting,—would she worry, think you, if her husband had heart disease?"

"No, she wouldn't," Mabel answered, "she would go about as usual, having a gay time, and

let him die."

"Oh, Mabel!"

"Leave me; I want to dress."

"Give me a kiss."

"No, sir, leave me, I say, or I'll ring for my maid."

"Ring for her, and I'll act the fool before her."

"What's come over you?"

"I don't know, but I think it's Leah."

"Leah?"

"Yes, what she said, I mean."

"You are crazy. Go out of here, I tell you."

"Kiss me then, on the lips."

"I won't."

"Why? You've kissed me on the lips before today. You bent over and kissed me when Dr. Bob was doing something to my hand and I fainted. Kiss me that way, Mabel, just once, and I won't bother you again for a month."

"I thought you were unconscious at that time."

"So I was, but that kiss brought me to."

"Pshaw, I just played that bit of sentimentality off before Dr. Bob. He thought I meant it too, and gave me such a smile! No wonder Leah fell in love with him."

"She is not in love with him."

"She is."

Max Stanhope went next to the Continental, and was admitted to Worrell's room.

He found him lying with his eyes wide open staring at the ceiling. Dr. Traynell was with him.

"Does he know me, do you think?" Max asked. The sick man dropped his eyelids.

"That means 'yes,'" said Dr. Traynell.

"Have you anything to communicate to me privately?" Max continued.

The eyes remained open.

"About Leah?" he whispered,

The eyes seemed to open wider.

"She told me what you acknowledged to her."

No movement.

"Did you trick us?" The eyes were set.

Max hurried to take Ralph the news and both men felt relieved that the scoundrel had died without making Leah any further trouble.

That night the papers set forth in big type:

"Death's hand on Mason Worrell." And beneath the head line: "Hon. Mason Worrell, Secretary of State, died at 4.30 o'clock this afternoon at the Continental Hotel. The interment will take place at Washington, D. C. A special train bearing the remains of Mr. Worrell will leave Philadelphia at 9.45 o'clock to-morrow morning for the Capital City.

"Mr. Worrell's illness began several months ago and he came to Philadelphia for medical treatment. Yesterday he suffered a stroke of

apoplexy, which proved fatal."

Then came a eulogy of his grand career as a public man and a diplomat, ending with: "Mason Worrell was a man of steadfast conviction, unswerving honesty and undoubted ability."

## VI.

When Stanhope told Wentworth of Mason Worrell's death, they were in Ralph's smoking room; and when each had expressed his satisfaction at the good ending of a bad business and were puffing blue rings steadily, Max broke the silence.

"Isn't it singular," he remarked, "that some men—live men with good looks, ambition and energy, are totally unable to inspire the passion of love, while others—the ugliest, slowest of slow coaches, utterly worthless specimens, are worshiped? Why is it? Can you tell?"

"Give a case in point."

"Myself and Silly Henderson."

"Max!" exclaimed Ralph, laughing. "To name yourself in the same breath with Silly!"

"He has a wife who worships him."

"Yes, I often wonder what that beautiful woman sees in that hideous caricature of a man. 'Silly' he is rightly named; but you, surely you don't want to tell me that you are the man who cannot inspire love? Why, half the women in the city are wild about you, and you know it."

"But not my wife."

"But not your wife—well—hm—I'm not so sure about that."

"What hypothesis do you go upon?"

"Her face. I saw her looking at you once, and I am a keen reader. It was the same—the same as when Leah looked at Dr. Bob."

"You imagine that Leah is in love with that

young man, don't you?"

"No, I do not imagine it."

"Tell me how she looked at Dr. Bob."

"Wistfully, with passion repressed, longingly."

"And you say that Mabel looked at me like that? Why, man, she has just told me that she kissed me tenderly, when my hand was hurt, merely to play off sentimentality on Dr. Bob, and she laughed at him because the green gosling believed her and gave her a beautiful smile."

"That expression was there, I tell you."

"Why should she look at me in that way? She knows that I love every inch of her. I would give half my fortune to be Mabel's chosen lover

for one whole day and night."

"Perhaps that is not for us. Leah does not love me either, as I would be loved, but I have made her life bright and must be satisfied. I would be willing to die on the spot, if I could die Leah's lover in Leah's arms."

"She chose you, that time, you remember, when she had three other chances, all better than yours."

"I know she did, but I do not fill her heart after all these years, and she—she loves Dr. Bob—and I, Max, have heart disease, fully developed. He said so last night after he had examined me."

"Who?"

"Dr. Russell."

"But people with heart disease live to old age sometimes."

"I won't, I feel it. The summons will come soon and I must leave her to—hand me that package from the table behind you, I must take another powder."

Max looked at his friend and saw that he was in pain. "Shall I call any one—Leah?" he

asked.

"She has not come in yet," Ralph replied. "I told her to go out, to distract her mind, and she is long about getting back. She grieves so about that stain on her father's memory, you have no idea how that eats into her proud heart."

"There is something else that frets her worse

than that."

"What is it?"

"The condition of your health. She does not want to lose you."

"How do you know that? Have you seen her

lately?"

"Boys mustn't tell tales out of school."

"You have seen her to-day?"

"Yes."

"I wish she would not worry about me."

"Oh, she was laughing heartily when I left her: and here she comes; and Mabel is with her, by gad, and I'm due in ten minutes at the Union League. I'll get out before they come down,—but say, when did my wife look that way at me?"

"Oh, one day, I forget just on what occasion,

when you were parrying jokes with Leah."

That night Max took his wife to the opera. Their box was a cynosure, and soon visitors began to drop in. He gave place to Mabel's latest

fancy, an author of some renown, and took up a position in the back of the box where he could watch them unobserved.

He saw the writer flush up when Mabel smiled at him, and directly after, she glanced about the box uneasily, and stifled a yawn behind her fan. Then she took up her opera glasses and scanned the other boxes, the parquet and circle, and finally the whole house. She answered in kind the nods of her many friends and acquaintances, then turning to her companion she inquired if Mr. Stanhope had left the house. Her husband stepped forward and stood behind her chair, but she gave no sign that she was aware of his presence.

On the way home in the carriage Max leaned over her. "We have come to a dark place now," he said, "and I want a kiss."

"I hope you may get it," she answered.

"I can take as many as I have a mind to, you poor weak little midget."

"I thought you said you wanted a kiss."

"So I do."

"No, you don't, you only want to take one."

"Won't you give me one? That was such a good one you gave me when my hand was hurt. I quite long for another like it. Come, just one like that, and I won't ask for another for a long, long time."

"Still harping on that kiss. I am surprised. It was a silly thing for me to do. I will never be

so foolish again. Here we are at home."

"And I am coming upstairs with you."

"Not to-night, Maximilian, some other time,"

and she whisked lightly away from him, after he had helped her out, and when he reached her room he found the doors locked against him, both from the hall and from his own room.

He settled himself in an easy chair to wait until she was sleeping soundly, and then he deftly picked the lock of the communicating door.

As he stepped across the threshold she moved her head restlessly on her pillow, and she sobbed in her sleep. He knelt down close by her, inhaled her sweet breath, impressed a soft kiss on her lips and returned to his chamber without closing the door again.

Mabel's slumbers did not cease until near daylight, when she sat up in bed and stared about

her.

"Why, I locked that door last night," she murmured to herself. "What does this mean?"

Out of her downy nest she crept and over to the door on tiptoe. Before her, propped up by pillows, almost sitting in bed, was her husband, sound asleep, and by his side, on the silken coverlid, lay a bouquet of white roses she had picked and taken to Leah the day before, still held together with a few strands of her own golden hair, with which she had bound them.

She walked quietly over to the bed, picked up the roses, threw them down under it, and leaned over the sleeping man to study his features. Her movement, light as it was, disturbed him. He was dreaming. "Leah, Leah," he whispered; and after a short pause, slowly came forth the burning words, "to die Leah's lover in Leah's arms!"

Mabel left the room as silently as she had en-

tered it and pulled the door to behind her.

When Max awoke, he did not at first think of the door he had opened, but by the time he was ready to go down, he remembered it as well as the flowers he had taken to bed with him at the same time. He picked them up, assuming that he had thrown them under the bed during the night, and put them into his breast pocket, but on his way out he picked up something else.

Mabel was awake when he opened the door and

greeted him with a malicious smile.

He sat down on the bed and toyed with one of her hands. "You came in to me last night," he said. "I found one of your rings on the carpet."

He looked at her searchingly when he said this and saw her change color as she held up her finger and requested him to replace the ring.

He complied with her wish, then pulled her arm around his neck and stooped until his head rested

on her shoulder.

She submitted passively. "Let me know when you are ready to stop fooling," she said. "I would like to take another nap; it is early yet."

He stayed where he was, however, and not until her heart beat regularly and she slept with a smile on her lips, did he gently release himself and leave her.

"Do not disturb your mistress," he said to the Abigail, "let her have her sleep out." And a mo-

ment later he went out.

Half an hour before luncheon he was home again, and as he kissed his wife in her boudoir, his vest took a notion to bulge out, and she saw

in his inside pocket the roses she had thrown under the bed.

"Where did you get these things?" she said,

pulling them out.

"I took them from Leah's work table in the sitting room," he answered, "on my way out of Wentworth's yesterday, a little while after you and she came in. I saw you pick them and fix them up for Leah, and—and I wanted some white roses, and so I took them. Leah won't mind, I am sure."

"Why didn't you ask me to pick you some or cut them yourself? We have plenty of them in bloom."

"You may pick me a bouquet to-day."

"Thank you, you may pick it yourself. Do you want these things any more?" holding up the

withered bouquet.

"Yes, put them back where you found them." But she threw them into the grate and watched them burn up with a look of satisfaction which puzzled her husband.

"Why did you do that, Mabel?" he asked.

"Because I felt like it," she answered.

"Little spitfire!" he said, hugging her to him, "you are mine, puss."

"What if I asked to be freed from you now."
He looked at her aghast. "Mabel, you surely will never ask me to do that, now," he said.

"Don't be too sure. If Ralph Wentworth succumbs to the heart disease and Leah becomes a widow, I shall want a divorce from you and become some sort of a widow too."

"Do you mean that, Mabel?"

"I do."

"Then you have given your heart to a man."

"I have."

"It is not the author?"

"No, it is not the author. The author can't hold a candle to the man I love; but let me go,

do you hear the lunch bell?"

Max walked soberly down with her to luncheon. "I know now what the look meant," he thought. "'Wistfully, with repressed passion, longingly,'-certainly. She was 'wistfully, with repressed passion, longingly' wishing herself free from me, that's what; and I'm a numbskull to expect anything else from her. Gad, what fools we mortals be! Last night when she looked around the box and surveyed the house with her glass, I could have sworn she was searching for me. Fiddlesticks! She was searching for the other fellow, and felt disappointed that he didn't show up; and when her heart beat so against my ear this morning, it was anger made it throb till she was exhausted and slept. She burned the roses up because she would not allow anything belonging to her, or that she had handled, to be so near to my heart: but what the dickens was she doing in my room? I'll bet she didn't come in at all; just rolled the ring in to make a fool of me; the smile with which she greeted me had enough of deviltry in it to account for all that."

That night they went to a ball at the Academy,

where they met Ralph and Leah and Dr. Bob.

Ralph was not feeling well, and was advised by the doctor to go home early, but his wife was enjoying herself, and he paid no heed to the wiser counsel.

Twice that night Leah waltzed with Max Stanhope, and Mabel sat out both dances with Leah's husband.

She was tired, she said to her partners, and

would rest with Mr. Wentworth.

"She is lovely to-night," Ralph said, his eyes resting with pride on Leah as she floated below him in the arms of her partner. "They're a handsome couple, don't you think so?"

"Yes," said Mabel, "they seem to be made for

each other."

"Made for each other, nonsense! Max was made for you. You are as handsome as Leah is, in your way, and Max loves the ground you walk on."

Mabel smiled. "How do you know that?" she asked.

"By every way a man can show his love for his wife."

"How do you show your love for your wife?"

"By surrounding her with all that is bright and gay, watching over her with the tenderest care and solicitude, and making any sacrifice to secure her happiness. I love Leah, you know that."

"Yes, many men love her," she answered.

"And you, too, you arrant little flirt. Both of you can wind them around your fingers tight enough to make them squirm. Max and I have often watched you and secretly enjoyed the fun you were having. Who's your latest admirer, the author?"

"Yes, the author. He gave me a poem last night at the opera, a tribute to my beauty, and Max didn't even get jealous when I stuck it into my bosom before him."

"He knew better than to do that. He knew his wife, evidently, as I know Leah. Max and I

trust our wives. You love Max?"

"Yes, as you love Leah; but here they come,

and oh, how happy they look."

"May I have the pleasure of dancing the next waltz with Mrs. Stanhope?" said her husband, as they came up.

"I promised it to Dr. Bob early in the evening,"

she replied.

The rejected partner put his hand on his heart and bowed with mock politeness to his wife. "Then I will dance again with Leah," he said. "She never refuses to waltz with me;" as two men came up to claim Leah and her for the next dance.

"You are not going to dance to-night, I hear, my boy," he added, turning to his friend Went-

worth.

"I dare not," was the reply. "Dr. Bob wants me to go home early, but Leah's having a good time, and I see no harm in my sitting here and watching her. Your wife and mine are the handsomest women here to night and the best dressed, and that's saying a good deal."

"Yes," the younger man sighed, "but they don't

love us."

"Mabel loves you all right. What ails you, man, that you can't see it? Why, she told me his moment that she loves you."

"How did she say it? What were you talking

of?"

"Let me see—we were talking of flirting, and she said,—but say, old fellow, she may not like me to repeat to you what she tells me—anyhow, I'll tell you what she said just before you came up when I asked her if she did not love you."

"And she answered—"

"She answered 'Yes, as you love Leah."

Max grew red and white. "Who is the man

with whom she is now dancing?" he asked.

"Why, don't you know? He is the son of Judge Hapnett and the nephew of Governor Fourfield."

"The nephew of the man who was with us that

night out west?"

"Yes, and the Governor will be here to-night."

"Does Leah know?"

"Yes, and so does Mabel. He is head over ears in love with your wife—young Hapnett, I mean. I'm surprised that you haven't met him before nor noticed their intimacy. The author, I suppose, superseded him. Fine looking like his uncle, isn't he?"

"Yes," said Max, "but I must hunt up my partner. I don't want to miss the next dance."

He hurried away but came back again almost

immediately.

"Look, Ralph, there is Governor Fourfield now," he said, "on the arm of our own Governor, and they are shaking hands with our wives. We must go, too, and greet him."

Governor Fourfield saw them coming and held out a hand to each. "Here we are all three together again," he said, "with Leah, Leah the beautiful,—and the other is lying dead in Washington. I will be at your house to-morrow, Wentworth; your wife whispered to me just now that she has something important to tell me, and, Stanhope, I hope to see you there too. Your little Baltimore belle has blossomed like a rose. She has promised to dance with me after I have had a hop with Leah. I am more than glad to have met you here to-night."

Mabel was dancing with Dr. Bob. A very slow, dreamy waltz this was, and Mabel, as she glided along, asked her partner if he did not think

Leah was charming that night.

"Mrs. Wentworth is brilliantly beautiful," he

replied, "she is lovely at all times."

"Are you not going to ask her to dance with you? You haven't yet done so, she tells me."

"Does she expect me to dance with her? I prefer not doing so,—yet, if she expects it——"

"She does; she has kept a blank on her pro-

gramme for you."

Just before the waltz quadrille, they were all grouped about Ralph Wentworth, Leah and Mabel, Dr. Bob and Max. Dr. Bob had asked Leah for the dance and she had not refused, while Max had declared that he was tired of it all and would stay with Ralph. Mabel moved about so that she stood at her husband's shoulder, then looking straight into his eyes she said, "I would like to have you for a partner in the waltz quadrille, Max; Mr. Hapnett does not dance well. Come, let's get in the same set with Leah and the doctor."

During the dance Max noticed how his wife

clung to him, hung on him, in fact, whenever his arms encircled her. "You are tired," he said,

"do you want to go home?"

"Yes, after this set," she replied. "Leah is going, too, after she has had her dance with Dr. Bob. I had to ask him to dance with her, what do you think of it?"

"Did Leah tell you to ask him?"

"She did."

"She had better devote her spare time to Ralph,

she won't have him long."

"No, it will not be long now before she is free." Mabel sighed as her husband released her for the next figure.

## VII.

"Do you pay a visit to my husband to-morrow?" Leah asked Dr. Russell when she had the opportunity.

"Yes," he said, "to-morrow morning."

"You might have given him permission to dance just once with me to-night. He is passionately fond of dancing, and must have felt sad to be so entirely out of it; but he has not been lonely, there has been first one and then another friend with him all evening. He was particularly bright when Max was with him, or Mabel."

"You have been watching him, evidently."

"Oh, yes, and if he had been dull a moment or alone, would have gone to him and stayed with him."

"You love your husband, then?"

"Yes, doctor, I love him. He is the best man God ever created. I realize it now, now when I feel that I shall lose him."

"Does your husband know that you love him—in that way?"

"Not yet."

"Then tell him immediately, but carefully, Mrs. Wentworth, carefully; a sudden shock would not be good for him. Even sudden joy might unnerve him."

"He has told you our story, I can see that."

"Yes, he has told me it, and I am glad, glad from my heart, that you have learned to love him at last."

On the night Dr. Bob examined Ralph Wentworth an important conversation had taken place between them:

"I am sorry to tell you, sir," said the doctor, as he laid aside his instruments, "that yours is a case of fully developed heart disease; the most inexperienced physician could tell you that. You must take the utmost care of yourself and keep perfectly quiet if you want to live to be an old man."

"I expected to hear that," the invalid answered, "and now sit down, I want to talk to you. I married my wife eighteen years ago and have done everything in my power to fill her life and make her happy since. Now if I die, she will be lonely and miserable, and I desire to prevent that. She is peculiarly situated. She is entirely alone in the world, very proud and sensitive; and there is a terror hanging over her, the fear of some act of her father's becoming public. Dr. Travnell loves her, but would give her trouble if he could: and somehow, I feel that she will eventually be in his power. I want some man, upright and honorable, to guard Leah against Dr. Traynell, to avert from her all sorrow, to make her life bright after I am gone. Will you be that man?"

"I, Mr. Wentworth? What do you mean?"

"I mean for you to marry her wher I am gone and make her happy."

"How do you know that I could do such an outrageous thing even if I should be willing? I hope you don't think I have improper thoughts about your wife, sir; I have not. I wouldn't allow my-

self to think of a married woman!"

"I know that and therefore trust you, and for that very reason ask you to promise me to marry Leah and watch over her when I am no longer here to do so. I love her, doctor, and would fain protect her, even from the grave. She does not love me as I wish to be loved, but she respects me and regards me as a friend and comrade. In eighteen years I have not been able to win her whole heart, but she gave me what she could—and now promise me, promise me that you will ask her to marry you when I am dead."

"I would marry no woman without first gaining

her love."

"But if she gives you that, will you ask her?"

"Yes, then I will ask her."

"I want you to do it six months after I am dead."

"That will be too soon, Mr. Wentworth; she will grieve for you longer than that, be assured."

"I wish her not to grieve: that's just what I'm pleading with you for; do not let her grieve or worry about anything, about anything, do you hear me! Oh, relieve my mind and do what I ask! I will not be here long, I may go quite suddenly; let me hug the comfort to my heart that she, my beautiful Leah, will be safe with you."

"Do not excite yourself, dear sir; I promise to ask her to marry me six months after your demise, to make her my wife if she be willing and loves me. But I hope you will be careful and live a long time. Good-bye, sir, and thank you for your confidence; it is not misplaced."

## VIII.

On his return from Mason Worrell's funeral, Dr. Traynell called on Mrs. Stanhope. "I want an interview here with Leah," he said abruptly. "Her husband has forbidden me the house, and I must see her privately on a very important matter concerning Mason Worrell."

"Can you not tell me what it is and let me break it to her? I'm sure it's bad news—"

"It is bad news and I must tell her myself."

"Can't you postpone it? Ralph is not so well, and she is worried enough just now."

"Does she still carry on with Dr. Russell?"

"No, that is off, I believe."

"Then I will wait a while before I speak to her. In three weeks I will call here again, and you will see that I get an interview, will you not?"

"If she wishes to meet you after I have mentioned to her your desire for an interview, it shall take place here, unless she decides otherwise."

"You are not looking well yourself, Mrs. Stanhope. What is it, too much dissipation? It looks like worry."

"We are all worried about Ralph, he is very weak."

"He was at the Academy the other evening, at the ball; I read of it in the papers; he can't be so very ill."

"He is failing in spite of all the care he receives."

"Oh, he'll pull along a while yet; though a

sudden shock will kill him eventually."

Governor Fourfield was shown to Ralph's sick room when he called the day after the ball, and there he found Leah and Mabel and Max Stanhope cheerfully conversing, the sick man in bed, propped up by pillows, joining in occasionally.

Leah told him at once of what had taken place in Mason Worrell's room at the Continental, and the Governor applauded with hands and feet when

she told him how she caned him.

"He is dead, the trickster," he remarked, when she had finished; "and we three and you, Leah. know at last that brave Colonel Emmet rests in honor in his far-away grave. After all, we four alone were cognizant of the occurrence and with us it was safe. Yet I am glad to be assured that he, your father, Leah, was not a cheat."

"You take my word then, Governor Fourfield,

against his? There is no other proof."

"I would take your word against the world. Leah, Leah the beautiful, for whose sake I am an old bachelor. See what you have deprived other women of, beauty; I would like to hug you right before your husband."

"He may, mayn't he, Ralph?" said Leah, as she went up to the Governor and threw her arms

about his neck and kissed him twice.

They all laughed at her impulsive action and at the expression of the Governor's face.

When the Governor was gone, Max and Mabel

also took their departure, and Leah, alone with Ralph, read the papers to him and busied herself about him until the doctor came. He ordered perfect quiet for the invalid and as much sleep as he could get.

The same order was repeated for about ten days. On the eleventh the patient seemed better; he was allowed to get up and immediately made

his way to his wife's boudoir.

"Well, this is a welcome surprise," she exclaimed. "Which do you prefer, the rocker or the couch?"

"The couch, please, I am still very weak; see how I tremble with the little exertion of getting here."

She fixed him on the couch and knelt down beside him. "I'm so pleased to have you here, Ralph," she said, as she kissed him. "It seems ages since I've had my boudoir knight. Did it seem long to you?"

"Not so very long. I've had you with me off and on a great deal in these last two weeks. You seemed to be flitting in and out of my sick room continually. You were anxious about me, were

you not?"

"But now I am cheerful again and happy; you are better and will soon be well. I want to tell you a secret, to make a confession to you, I mean; but I must wait until you are stronger; a sudden shock, even of joy, the doctor says, might not be good for you." And here she snuggled down beside him so that he rested within her arms. Ralph looked at her and saw that her face was slightly flushed and her eyes cast down.

"Are you resting comfortably?" she asked.

"Very comfortably," he replied. "Now for the confession! What have you done, Leah, that you are afraid to look at me?"

She clasped him tighter and said nothing.

"What, afraid to tell me? Well, never mind, I forgive you, whatever it is, and I feel so unaccountably happy all at once here within your arms, that I am satisfied to let well enough alone. I have never rested with you quite like this before, and something tells me that all will be well with us soon. Ah, that was a sweet kiss, almost, almost the sort of kiss I have been longing to get from you for eighteen years. Kiss me again, Leah, ah, kiss me. It seems to me that heaven is opening here on earth, but my heart—my heart can rest when I am no longer in your arms. Kiss me, kiss me!"

"Once more, Ralph, and then you must lie quietly in my arms and go to sleep; even joy might do you harm. I want you to live, Ralph,

live long and happily, live for me."

"Yes, yes, Leah, but give me the kisses, not one, but as many as I want. I can sleep after. I can always sleep, you know."

"You must sleep now," she said, and kissed him once more and pressed one of her hands over

his eyelids.

"No, no, dear," he protested, "keep me in your arms. I will be patient and try to sleep." He closed his eyes and lay quiet but not for long. "Do you know what your heart says, Leah? It says 'thump, thump, I'm beating for Ralph; thump, thump, I'm beating for Ralph."

"Go to sleep, Ralph, and rest."

"But why does it do that? It has never done it before."

"Go to sleep."

"I can't, Leah, it sets me crazy, your heart does. Give me your lips again, let me be happy; oh, kiss me, kiss me, hold me close and kiss me! Eighteen years is such a long time, Leah. I have waited eighteen years and now it says 'thump, thump, I'm beating for Ralph,' and you won't kiss me."

"Be quiet, Ralph, do not excite yourself, I'll

kiss you to sleep."

She kissed him many times, as a woman kisses the man she loves, and then: "I love you, Ralph," she whispered at last.

"You love me? Leah, at last, it is true!"

"Yes, Ralph, love for you stirred in my heart when I thought I would lose you, and I am so happy with you, my husband. You couldn't die and leave me now, now that I love you, at last?"

A deep sigh came from his breast. "I am Leah's lover at last," he said, "Leah's lover in

Leah's arms—I'm fainting."

She jumped up and rang for assistance, but no restoratives could revive Ralph Wentworth: he was dead.

He had died on the spot, as he had told Max he was willing to do, Leah's lover in Leah's arms.

Leah was heartbroken. "I killed him," she kept repeating to herself, and to the doctor when he came. "You warned me that even great joy was not good for him, and I told him I loved him, and I killed him. Let me die, too; oh, let me

die, too! Ralph, Ralph, how could you leave me? You were all the world to me, Ralph, and you died!"

Mabel was soon by her side and tried to comfort her, but it was in vain. She would not be

quiet until they drugged her.

For hours after, when she awoke, she wandered about, wringing her hands and calling aloud for her departed one, and when Max took her to where he lay, and she saw him smiling peacefully in death, her heart was rent with grief.

"Never again, Ralph, never again," she sobbed,

"will you be Leah's lover in Leah's arms."

"It was just as he wished to die; he told me so in those very words," said Max; and the bereaved woman, in her turn, related to him how she had learned to love her husband and how he had died in her arms on hearing the happy tidings.

After the funeral, before the will was read, the lawyer handed the widow a sealed letter, addressed to her in her husband's handwriting. She wept as she noted the clear, clean penmanship, and slipped the document into her bosom. "I will read it when I am alone," she said, "it is a message from the dead."

The deceased had left everything to her with the exception of a few trifling bequests to servants, his stable full of blooded horses, which was willed to Max, a house she had fancied to Mabel,

and his valuable library to Dr. Russell.

Alone in her room in Mabel's house that night, Leah broke the seal of her letter.

It read as follows:

"My DEAR WIFE:—When you read this letter I will be lying far away from you, in Mount Moriah, and you will miss me and be lonely and sad.

"My heart is heavy for you, and I beg of you to call on Dr. Bob for any help you may need in any trouble that may befall you. Be guided by him, and do what he will ask you to do in six months from this date.

"Beware of Dr. Traynell; he loves you but would harm you if he could. If ever he should get you into his power or threaten you in any way, appeal to Max, Governor Fourfield and Dr. Bob.

"And now, good-bye, till we meet again in Heaven.

RALPH."

What were Leah's feelings as she perused these lines will never be told. She wept and moaned and wrung her hands in despairing remorse as she now appreciated how much brighter she might have made Ralph's life in the eighteen years she had been with him. Even from the grave he was trying to brighten hers.

What it was that Dr. Russell would ask her to do in six months, she partly guessed, and all the more bitter was her regret that she had allowed her heart to stray from Ralph for an instant. "He thought to comfort me," she muttered, "because I loved the doctor, but I do not now and it is a punishment. My heart is with you, Ralph, in Mount Moriah."

## IX.

It was not on Leah alone that the ceremonies attendant upon the funeral told with poignant effect; her friend Mabel fainted by the side of the open grave, and though sufficiently revived to ride home in her carriage, she utterly broke down on reaching the house, and her frightened husband sent in haste for Dr. Russell.

"Do not leave her for a moment to-night," said the latter, "she is in a highly hysterical state and you are the only one who can do her any good

to-night."

So when she retired, Max went to her room. She was lying on her pillow sobbing helplessly. Max took her in his arms.

She clung to him and cried worse than ever. "What's the matter, dear? Something troubles you, I know; you are getting fearfully thin; can't you trust me with your sorrow, whatever it may be? Come, I will kiss away your tears and you will tell me all, will you not? Better now?" he asked. "Shall I leave you or stay?"

"Stay," she said, "I want to talk to you. Now, Max, is the time I want to be freed from you legal-

ly, as quietly as possible, but at once."

His heart sank within him and it was with an effort he raised himself on his elbow to look at

her. "You shall have what you want," he said, and then saw the pallor of death settle over her

features as she fainted again.

He was frightened, but she soon came to again and seeing his look of alarm patted him on the cheek gently. "Did you think I was dead, too, like poor Ralph?" she asked.

Next morning Leah was in the breakfast room before him. "How is Mabel?" she inquired with warm interest. "The maid tells me that you had

to send for Dr. Bob last night."

"She is asleep now," Max answered gravely. "I was alarmed and sent for the doctor. He says

she's hysterical."

"No wonder she is, with the trouble she has had with me in the last few days. Oh, Max, have you noticed how dreadfully pale she gets sometimes, and how thin she is? Why, she doesn't weigh more than a baby! What can be the matter with her? I asked Dr. Bob if he could tell me what ailed her. He laughed and said she was desperately in love. 'With whom?' I asked. 'Can you tell me that?' 'Certainly I can tell you,' he answered, 'she is in love with her husband.' And that is my opinion, too, Max."

"She is not. How could she be? She wants a

divorce from me."

"Max Stanhope! What are you saying? A divorce from you! You must be crazy."

"I am as sane as you are."

"But on what grounds? What does she accuse

you of?"

"Oh, incompatibility of temper or something; I do swear sometimes, you know."

"But never at her, you love her too dearly."

"Yes, I do love her, and it breaks my heart to do this thing, but I promised and I will keep my word."

"Oh, foolish, foolish Mabel, what is she thinking of? She couldn't be jealous, could she? She is not jealous of me, that's sure. I am her most intimate friend, you know, as she is mine. I tell her everything and she tells me—"

"What she pleases," Max finished for her.

Leah was silent.

"If you have time after breakfast," she proposed presently, "I want you to read the letter the lawyer gave me, Ralph's letter," and here she broke down and wept, "his message from the grave."

"Come to the library," Max requested, "and don't weep, I can't bear it. Ralph died happy, let

that comfort you."

"It does comfort me, Max, though I reproached myself bitterly at first. I often hear the glad tones of his voice as he repeated, 'It says thump, thump, I'm beating for Ralph.' It was my heart he referred to, beating against his own as he lay in my arms, and it consoles me that I gave him that assurance of my love for him before he died. And now read the letter and tell me what you think of it."

Max seated himself and took the letter, and as he read it line for line, the kind face of his friend came so vividly before him, and he felt his loss so keenly, that he bowed his head and wept as only a strong man can weep. Leah wept, too, and knelt down by him, and thus Mabel saw them as she stood in the doorway for a moment, whereupon

she withdrew as silently as she had come.

"He wants me to marry Dr. Russell," Leah complained, when she could control her voice; "that is the purport of the letter, but my heart is in the grave with Ralph. I do not love the doc-The impossibility of making an impression on his sternly virtuous heart had a certain fascination for me, and I longed to have him at my feet. Ralph and he must have had a long conversation about me and arranged this matter between them that night when I had returned from the Continental. They were together until near midnight, and next morning, when you saw me coming from his office, the doctor spoke kindly to me and told me not to worry about anything. He knew then, I am sure, that Ralph's days were numbered."

"Perhaps he did; but if I were you, I would not bother about anything until he speaks to you. He must have promised to do so, or Ralph would not have made the positive assertion that he would. You are safe to do right if you trust the guide that has been appointed for you. He is a young man, much younger than you, and there would be my objection to his marrying you, but he is wise and upright and honorable. As to Dr. Traynell, I don't think you need fear anything from him, but if he opens his lips to you in any but a polite way, come to me at once, or, if I should not be here, as is likely to be the case, go to Dr. Bob. Summon Joe Fourfield only as a last resource. Traynell has the entree here, you know, but you have my permission to treat him as you please

while you are in my house. I may not be in it long myself, alas. It will be hard for me to leave it. Leah, this house which I built Mabel fourteen years ago; every brick is dear to me, every stick of furniture, every hanging. It was our home, Mabel's and mine, and now we must part. In the long ago, out West, Leah, I loved you, but never would you have been to me what she is. I cannot part from her, I cannot. I gave her my word, my word of honor, Leah, that she should be free if ever she asked me to let her be: now she has asked me, and I am coward enough to feel like flinching. She couldn't get a divorce from me, but ah, God, she is miserable with me! She hugs me to her and kisses me and makes believe it is the other man! Can you conceive of anything more outrageous to a husband's feelings than that?"

Leah could not help smiling. "Mabel and I were always outrageous flirts, Max," she said: "it looks to me as if she were flirting with you. Women are queer. I could have sworn that she loved you. She never told me so in words, but there were a thousand little actions that seemed to proclaim it. I have seen her face fairly beam when you unexpectedly entered a room where she happened to be; and I have seen the sunlight on her countenance die out again as soon as you were gone, and she was always so delighted when she could be of use in your political work. And who is the other man? I am disappointed in her, my dear old friend."

"Do not withdraw your friendship from her, I beg of you, Leah, no matter what happens, who-

ever the man may be; be ever her staunch true friend, she needs you."

"I will be true to her, Max, do not fear."

Mabel seemed very white and frail this morning as she hurried forward as Max left the library. "I went to your room, dear," she said, "the moment I awakened, but you had already gone and when I came down you were busy with Max. Oh,

Leah, how like a tall lily you look to-day."

"And you are a poor little wilted white hyacinth. You are sick and miserable, even more miserable than I am. What hurts you, my little darling? Come, tell me what it is. Haven't I loved you as a dear friend and sister ever since the day Max brought you to us and proudly presented his wife? We fell in love with you immediately, Ralph and I; we were all young then, and you were very lovely and lively and bright. How we laughed at the lordly airs of Maximilian and his tender care of you! He could not hide his love; and to-day, Mabel, I am a widow, and Max goes to see about getting a divorce from you. It is sad. sad."

"Yes, Leah, it is sad, I feel it so, I assure you, but it cannot be helped. I received a note in the morning mail from Dr. Traynell. He asks for a private interview with you as soon as you feel

able to grant it."

"Dr. Traynell, what does he want with me?"

"He does not say."
"Have you any idea?"

"I have not, Leah. I asked him to tell me some weeks ago, when he intimated a desire for an in-

terview with you," and she handed Leah Dr.

Traynell's note just as Dr. Bob came in.

"You are downstairs to-day, Mrs. Stanhope?" he asked. "You are not fit to be about at all. You will have a bad spell of sickness if you are not very careful. Was your husband at home last night?"

"He was," she replied.

The doctor looked critically at her and shook his head. "How do you feel this morning?" he inquired of Leah.

"I am feeling as well as usual," she answered. "I always had robust health, you know. But

may I speak with you?"

She told him of the note Mabel had received from Dr. Traynell that morning.

The doctor meditated over it a long time.

"What do you think he wants with you?" he queried at last. "He may wish to make you an offer of his heart and hand now that you are a widow."

"That may enter into his calculations at the present time, but it could not have been in his mind when he first spoke to Mabel regarding an interview with me," Leah replied thoughtfully. "Did Ralph ever mention my father's name to you, doctor?"

"Once, Mrs. Wentworth, he told me that there was always a terror hanging over you, of some act of your father's being made public; but he gave me no further particulars."

"I will tell you my story, then," Leah decided, seating herself. "I was born in Ohio, and, my mother having died at my birth, I lived with her

only sister until I was ten years old. Then she too died. My father, Colonel Emmet, placed me in a school and there I stayed until I was past sixteen. My education finished, my father informed me that he had been unfortunate. great deal had lost a of money, that he could give me but poor accommodation with him. I might stay on and be trained for a teacher if I liked, he could spare that much, but I chose to go with him. He was so handsome and stately, upright and honorable. and had won distinction in the war. His hair was abundant and white as the driven snow.

"From place to place I went with him through the West until we got beyond the Rockies. I don't know what took up his time during the day, but at night he invariably brought home male friends with whom he played cards. Sometimes I took a hand at Old Sledge or euchre, the only games I ever learned to play. I did not care for cards, and often wished my father were not so fond of

them.

"Now to our lodgings in the far West, came regularly for about six weeks, Mason Worrell, the man of whom the papers have lately praised so loudly the talents and honorable career, Max Stanhope, Ralph Wentworth and Joe Fourfield, who is now Governor of Ohio.

"Every one of these four men fell in love with me, but none of them showed it except Mason Worrell, and for him I felt nothing but contempt, first because I thought he was ruining my father, and then, because he always looked at me like a wolf watching for an opportunity to devour a lamb.

"He knew my father and I were all alone in the world, that we had not a single relative, and that soon my father would be penniless, and he laid his plans accordingly. He knew also what attracted the other three men to our lodgings, but he did not take them into account, at which I have often wondered

"One never-to-be-forgotten, awful night, they were all sitting around the rickety table, playing as usual, and I was leaning over my father's shoulder, wishing he would stop soon and take me for a walk. The sun beat down pitilessly throughout the day on the ridges and falls of that hilly section, but at night the air was cool and very refreshing, and I loved to hang on his arm and wander out with him along the trails, below the falls, or through the canyon and listen to the exciting recitals of his experiences during the war.

"I think he would have stopped and come with me, for he had lost everything and had nothing more to put up, but Worrell called out: 'Stake Leah.' I am sorry to say it, but I believe my father would have done so, he was so infatuated with gambling, had not the others objected.

"'No; you must not stake Leah,' Ralph exclaimed, and a shower of abuse fell upon the despicable proposer of such a transaction. 'Well, then, stake the ring on her finger,' he went on, unheeding. It was a ring he himself had given me one day because I admired the big ruby in it. It looked out of place on his hand, which was ill-

shaped and horny, and as I jestingly told him so, he pleaded that I should let him place it on mine and see how it looked there. I was amused at his beseeching appeal and consented to the transfer.

"I did not value it as highly as he expected me to, however, and when he called for it as a stake I pulled it off at once and threw it on the table. They played for it and my father won. 'You cheated that time, Colonel Emmet,' yelled Worrell; and without another word of warning, he shot him like a dog.

"Max Stanhope was down on the murderer with one bound, while the other two attended to my poor father, gasping, as he did, in the agony of death, an indignant denial of the disgraceful

charge.

"The cards he still held in his hand were laid on the table and examined; when lo, they were found to bear irrefutable testimony of foul play, and Mason Worrell was allowed to go free; for out there, in those days, they made their own laws, and according to one of these a man caught cheating at cards could be shot dead for it.

"And so my white-haired old father lay there dead and dishonored; and I was alone without a friend or protector. Then up stepped Joe Four-field and said solemnly, 'Leah, I love you; and here and now I lay my heart and fortune at your feet.' 'So do I,' 'So do I,' Max and Ralph spoke

in succession.

"'She is mine,' Mason Worrell shouted; and he would have caught me in his arms, had I not rushed up to Ralph Wentworth and proclaimed that I was his.

"They bought a grave for my father and fenced it in, but no stone marks the spot where rests Colonel Emmet; I judged it best that it should be so.

"I married Ralph at once and he made a home for me here, and for eighteen years we were never troubled by the murderer of my father; but on the day you were called in to me, I was suddenly summoned to his bedside. He was at the Continental, and I went there with Ralph and Mabel. He would see none but me, however; and when I was alone with him he confessed to me that it was by a sleight of hand he made it appear to the others that my father cheated, and he begged of me to say that I forgave him as I hoped to be forgiven. I asked him if he would acknowledge his guilt before my husband and he said he would not, that he had made his name to rank with the highest and it must not be dishonored. He told me that, and I took a cane that was standing by the bed and beat him across the face with it with all my might. That's how I forgave him! And can you blame me, Dr. Russel1?"

The doctor was a prey to too violent emotions to give an immediate and categorical answer to Leah's query, and she was too excited to pause

for a reply.

"Dr. Traynell was Worrell's physician at the Continental," she went on almost immediately, "and although the wretch never spoke again during the two days he still lingered after my visit, I fear he may have found some other means of imparting his own version of the story of that

terrible night to his doctor. Now, what shall I do? Grant Traynell the interview, or refuse to see him?"

"Grant him the interview so that we may know what it is he wishes to say to you. It may be for what I suggested first."

"Surely he would show a little respect and consideration for my feelings and not ask me to

marry him so soon after Ralph's death."

"Dr. Traynell is not a stickler for propriety. In any case do receive him as soon as possible, Mrs. Wentworth, and then report to me what he says."

## X.

LATER in the day, Leah went to visit Ralph's grave. Mabel was asleep when she returned,

so she joined Max in the library.

He had come in an hour before and had gone to the library. He was staring vacantly at some papers he held in his hand, and was utterly unconscious of Leah's approach until she stood before him.

"Here is some medicine Dr. Bob left for Mabel," she said, placing a small vial before him, "and he wants you to give her exactly twenty drops every four hours, beginning with eight o'clock. 'Be careful,' he said, 'in measuring it out, it is a poison with this singularity: a few drops more or less than twenty might mean death to her.'"

"That means that I must stay up all night," Max answered positively. "I am such a sleepy head I could never wake up at the right time, and if I did, I would, as likely as not, give her the whole bottle full in one dose."

"I am wakeful, Max, and could rap on your door every four hours. I could go in and give it to her, for that matter; but, for some reason, the doctor insists on your giving it to her yourself."

"I will give it to her. I won't have her with

me very long, you know, and am willing to do her greater service. I have found out, Leah, that by employing certain counsel, and not sparing the dollars, she can procure a divorce from me in a very few months. She will make application as soon as she is able to go out, and I will be alone; aye, worse than alone. If she were dead I think I could bear it, but to know her another's—ah, well, when she is gone, all will be gone. I will have nothing to live for, and I'll just make a beast of myself and drink myself to death, that's what I'll do. I'm a failure all round with you women. You refused me; she cannot love me after having been my wife for fourteen years."

Mabel came in smiling languidly and took a seat near Leah. "I am feeling better," she said, "after my long sleep. What is that you have in your hand, Max, marked with a skull and cross

bones?"

"Some medicine for you, ma'am! I'm to give you twenty drops of poison every four hours to-night. It is not meant to kill you, ma'am, but if I should happen to give you a few drops more or a few drops less of this mixture, made up from one of Russell's special prescriptions, to-morrow you'd be as dead as a door nail. The doctor left orders that nobody's to give it to you but me, ma'am."

"But you can't wake up every four hours,

Max."

"Them's the orders and I obeys 'as best I kin.'
There goes the dinner bell, and we must eat if the heavens fall."

He got up, put his hands under his coat tails

and strutted up and down, English flunkey style,

to make Leah smile.

Mabel seated herself at the writing desk and scribbled off a few notes. "By the way, Leah," she remarked presently, "what shall I say to Dr. Traynell?"

"Tell him to come here to-morrow at eleven o'clock, and that I will grant him an interview."

The bell rang again and they obeyed the summons.

As the two women rose from the table together, Max observed: "I'll not be long over my wine and walnuts, and will be with you directly in the

snuggery."

The snuggery was a room on the second floor, half parlor, half sitting room, in which were to be found easy chairs and lounges, pictures, bric-a-brac and books, and three or four musical instruments. Here Mabel and Max had spent many hours together and here only their most in-

timate friends were allowed to join them.

Painfully strange indeed was the conversation held within its walls on this evening. So unreal was the tone of levity which Max Stanhope would fain infuse into it; so obviously strained were the efforts he put forward in that direction. He had gone the length of turning into a comic recitation for the benefit of his two companions, the latest club story he had heard—the tragic end of a well known whiskey fiend; but as he concluded it, the cruel irony of the parody he was acting stung him so deeply, that, suddenly changing his tone, he slowly said: "That will be the end of

Max Stanhope before another year comes round." "Oh, never!" exclaimed Leah. "You surely

will never disgrace yourself to that extent."

"It shall be so," he repeated. "I have made up my mind to drink myself to death when the woman whom I love turns from me." He looked straight at Mabel as he said this.

"Give me the poison," was her only response.

"It is striking eight."

"I left it in the library," Max said. "I will go for it."

And in a moment he was back. "Here are your twenty drops of poison measured out carefully," he remarked, as he handed a medicine glass to his wife. "Drink it down, and if you feel sleepy after it, go to your room. I have some letters to write and I want to smoke, after which I will return to you. Leah looks worn out. She should retire early, too."

Mabel took the medicine from his hand and

drank it down.

Max took back the glass and putting both glass and vial into his pocket, walked off to his den.

"Yes, I think I will go to my room, Mabel," said Leah. "That long ride and the conversation I had have tired me out. Besides, I must get all the rest I can before I see Dr. Traynell. I have a presentiment that he will bring me nothing but trouble."

"I hope not," Mabel answered with a listlessness which Leah attributed to the soporific

draught her friend had just taken.

"Good night, dear, I will do a little writing in my room and then retire myself. Good night," she repeated with an affectionate kiss. "You were always dear to me, Leah, remember that."

## XI.

Max in his den was for a long time busy with some writing over which he deeply pondered and

thought and worried.

Two cigars were consumed during the operation, and when he had folded the sheets and placed them in safety, he filled a bowl from a pouch of tobacco, and, leaning back in his chair puffed at his pipe meditatively. Presently he relapsed by rapid mental stages into that one-idea state which is but little removed from insanity. He must know who was Mabel's lover, the man who would rob him of his wife and make him so utterably miserable. There was her writing desk facing him, very near his own-she often sat here and wrote while he smoked. He would look at her cards, her letters, her diary. But the diary was gone from its accustomed place in an inner compartment, and the dainty little squares in the card drawer were no other than her own exquisitely simple and elegant visiting cards. Only the letters remained.

Now and again, as he looked through them, he chanced upon a name or a suggestion that tempted him to further investigation, but in the end, when he had read every letter and later examined every loose scrap of paper the desk contained, even turned the pages of the carefully

kept housekeeping journal, he found himself still in ignorance of the identity of the whereabouts of the man whom he would gladly slay to keep him from Mabel.

Evidently she was afraid he would kill him, that's why she kept him out of the way, and so

carefully concealed his identity.

And he, Max, had pledged his word to her, but when it came to the test—his gaze left the pipe and wandered first up and down the quiet room, then, from the side window, far into the green and sheltered depths of the larger conservatory. He was thinking—or was it dreaming? Picturing his early life with Mabel in this home he had entered with her in joyous content. Their life together in fourteen years had been vivid in interest, intense in aim; he had thought it real happiness; but the future that confronted him like a dense mist, in which all things were vague, must be lived without her, if he kept his promise.

He would not keep it. The law was on his side. He would deal with her so tenderly, be so sunny and genial, that the icy barrier between them would melt away until only a thin veil of coldness remained, which, by his tact, would be finally lifted. A new spirit would hover o'er the scene. She would be conscious only that something had come and gone between them which it were better to forget. She would let him see again that he was much to her, and perhaps, perhaps would learn to love him as Leah had learned to love Ralph after eighteen years. Would she? No, steadfast Mabel was not volatile Leah.

Mabel loved another man-if he could only

place him, the scoundrel, she wouldn't love him long: he would challenge him, though duelling was out of date, fight him, kill him; he knew he would if he ever confronted him, and she would continue to love him to the end. How miserable she was now, tearful and sick and so quiet He missed her lively impetuous ways, the sudden flashes of anger in her cheeks and eyes, the impatient stamp of the little foot and the fretful shake of the head with which she had always managed him.

And how rapidly she was losing flesh. She was only a feather weight compared to the well-rounded, plump little darling she had been up to within a few weeks ago. Only since Ralph's illness had he observed it. He could give her to Death; but oh, he could not see her miserable. Everything was beclouded. Everything pointed to misery. He lost his self-command, bowed his

head and gave way to despair.

He must do violence to every prejudice, strangle his passion for Mabel, let her take the best life was likely to offer her with another, and fulfill his promise. Aye, he would fulfill it. He would step down and out as he had said he would.

At ten o'clock he went to Mabel's room, and, finding her still asleep, returned to the den for another hour of self-torture and useless repining. Toward the end of it he was calmer, and selected some books and papers to take upstairs with him. Seating himself in a low chair, he read for about twenty minutes, then gave himself up again to vain imagining,—the bottle with Mabel's medicine and the glass he had set on the bureau.

Mabel still slept soundly, her sweet face outlined by the pillows, two long thick plaits of her golden hair hanging over the edge of the bed, her hands and lace-covered arms lying on the coverlid.

He moved his chair close to the bed, stooped over and kissed her, and then, after once more consulting his watch, which indicated 11.30, he leaned back in his chair, and, before he knew it, was paying forfeit to overtaxed nature.

Unconsciously he swayed to and fro with a sense of steering himself through a vast sea of trouble to a difficult haven, which he reached at last—and settled himself for good—and was

lulled to rest by the silence.

The clock struck twelve.

Mabel heard it. She raised herself on her elbow and viewed her sleeping husband; he was sighing and moaning, and presently she distinctly heard him murmur: "Ah, Ralph, Ralph, to die Leah's lover in Leah's arms."

She slipped out of bed quietly and moved over to the bureau; here she poured the contents of the vial into the medicine glass—when the door opened and Leah entered. "You are up, I see," she said, "and Max is asleep. I heard the clock strike and listened for some movement in here, but none came, so I came to the door and finding it open walked in; but—great God, Mabel, you have made a mistake; the vial is empty!" and she snatched the glass from Mabel's hand. "Oh, how fortunate it is I came in! Max, Max, wake up and measure the medicine. Oh, Lord, oh, Lord, I am unnerved."

Max opened his eyes.

"I heard the clock strike," Leah said to him excitedly, with a strange, terrified look, "and came in, and here stood Mabel with this glass in her hand and the bottle empty. Pour it out, Max, and measure her out twenty drops. I couldn't do it if you killed me."

Max took the glass from her trembling hand, poured its contents back in the bottle, and counted

out the twenty drops.

"Hold the glass yourself, Max, while she takes it," said Leah, who had sunk in a heap on the floor. "Twenty drops, more or less than twenty would kill her. Oh, God in Heaven, if she had been found dead to-morrow, I might have been

called upon to swear away your life."

Max held the glass to Mabel's lips and saw that she drank every drop. "I am ashamed of myself," he said contritely. "I read until 11.20, and was wide awake when the half hour struck. How I came to drop off so quickly I can't imagine. Thank you, Leah, for coming in, I will not go to sleep between this and four, I promise you; so go back to bed."

Leah gazed at him breathlessly; she was still shaking. "Put Mabel to bed," she gasped, "and cover her up, she looks white and frozen. Oh, Lord, oh, Lord, if I hadn't come in when I did, she would have killed herself and you would have been hung for it!"

Max picked Mabel up and laid her back on her pillows, and as he tucked the covers about her, he whispered soothingly, "Sleep now, and don't be unhappy. It will soon be over, you will soon

be free. I am only waiting for you to get well to leave you."

Mabel closed her eyes, and her husband turned

his attention to Leah.

"I shall take the bottle with me," she said in a tremor; "and when four o'clock comes, I'll be here again to see you measure out the next dose."

And with Max's aid she staggered toward the door, holding tightly in her hand the bottle she

had taken from the bureau.

When they were in the hall, she whispered to him: "Lie down beside her, Max, and take her in your arms and keep her there for the rest of the night. Kiss her and pet her. Let her think you the Prince of Wales, the King of Denmark, or the Devil; but kiss her and pet her this night. She would have killed herself a while ago."

## XII.

Max accordingly went back; but back, too, went his thoughts to the same old circuit. "Soon I must leave her," he communed with himself. "She will no longer be mine but another's. Is he handsome and manly? What particular fascination had he to draw Mabel? What actual charm or palpable virtue? Would it be pleasant for him to live with Mabel? Would he admire her love of life and of the world, her sentimental attitude toward young men—her pet subjects, her fastidious appreciation of a husband's prerogatives—depending in uncertainty upon her whims? Ah, with all her faults my heart yearns for her. There will be no ray of sunshine on my lonely track when she is gone from me.

"If she had taken that medicine, she would have died. I could have borne that better, and if I had been hung for it, as Leah suggested, what matter? I will have nothing to live for when she is

gone, nothing.

"Why must this dreadful sorrow fall on me? Oh, how I suffer!" He began to stroke the little hands on the coverlids. "When I cease to suffer, I shall be lying near Ralph in Mount Moriah. Oh, dear God, I have led a clean life, done all the good I could in the world, served you with my whole heart. I cannot give her up to another.

Turn her heart to me even in the eleventh hour,

Almighty Father, or let her die."

"I love you, I love you, ah, how I love you! Death, death, without you!" Mabel articulated.

Max started and looked at her.

She was still asleep.

"Dreaming of the other," he muttered, gritting his teeth. "Who can he be, and why does she not speak to Leah about him? Poor Leah, how frightened she was to-night. It was stupid of me to go to sleep when I had only a few more minutes to wait. 'Kiss her and pet her,' she said, 'this night,' and so I will. You are mine, Mabel, to-night, in my arms, and I love you, I love you."

Leah came in and after the third dose of the dreaded medicine had been administered, she persuaded Max to retire to his own room while she would spend the remainder of the night by the

side of his wife.

To her surprise, when she went down to the breakfast room in the early morning she found he had preceded her.

"I must go out early," he said in answer to her look of inquiry. "I have business on hand that needs looking after. Is Mabel still sleeping?"

"Still sleeping heavily," she replied. "The medicine is doing it, I suppose; but, Max, suppose she had taken what was in that glass!"

At eight Max gave Mabel her last dose of medicine, and Leah immediately seized the empty vial and smuggled it away in her pocket.

Mabel looked up hastily. "Why did you do

that?" she asked, coldly, almost haughtily.

Leah watched the proud face closely and

thought she saw its expression waver as she held her look; nay, the beautiful pale countenance did change visibly when she answered: "Because you were crazy last night and would have killed yourself by taking an over dose. There is a label on the bottle. Dr. Bob did not put it up himself, and for fear that you might want to get it duplicated, in order to commit suicide, I take possession of it."

Instead of replying, Mabel gathered up her, mail.

"Do you think you will be well enough this afternoon to see Mr. Severne, the lawyer?" Max inquired in a suppressed tone.

She raised her head and looked searchingly into her husband's eyes. "To-morrow afternoon

I will see him," she said.

Max departed and Mabel went on with her letters.

Leah propped herself on a couch full of cushions and took up a book, but presently, with a little thud, the book slid to the floor, and Mabel, attracted by the sound, noticed her friend slept.

She laid her pen down and sat and thought, then half started up, but returned to her correspondence—resumed her pen and answered many of the kind inquiries regarding her health and the sympathetic allusions to Leah's bereavement, wrote a few pages in her diary, but finally leaned back again in her chair and once more sat gazing at Leah.

Nor was it long ere the cause of her mysterious watching became apparent. A movement of the beautiful sleeper on the couch disarranged her

garment and exposed the crepe-trimmed pocket

of her morning gown.

In an instant, noiselessly, breathlessly, Mabel had glided across the room, slipped her hand in the gaping pocket and drawn out the bottle; but Leah's hand clutched her and took it away from her again. "What did you mean to do?" she cried. "Mabel, Mabel, are you so desperate as all that! I shall destroy every vestige of it now," and so saying she took up a heavy paper weight, smashed the bottle to powder and threw it into the fire, after which she knelt down by Mabel who had seated herself again, buried her head in her lap and wept as though her heart would break. "Oh, I wish Dr. Bob or Max were here," she sobbed, "if they were only here! I am afraid of you, Mabel."

Mabel said nothing but stroked Leah's hair softly until she had calmed herself, and she led her back to the couch, pushed her down on the cushions, and seated herself on the edge, directly

in front of her.

And there she stayed until the bell rang and Dr. Bob was ushered in.

"I came as soon as I could," he said when he had greeted the ladies. "You are better, Mrs. Stanhope, much better. The medicine has done you good. Have you the bottle handy? I want to take it with me. It is not safe to leave those things about where there are servants. You have taken it all, haven't you?"

"Every drop of it," Mabel answered, "and Leah has ground the bottle to powder and burned it.

She thought as you did, it wasn't safe to leave it about."

The doctor turned to Leah. "You are looking very haggard this morning, Mrs. Wentworth," he said, taking her hand. "You are full of fear, actually trembling. You will be on my hands next if you are not careful. Sit up and rouse yourself, Traynell will soon be here, I presume. It is about half-past ten; don't show the white feather before him."

Leah tried to raise herself, but found it utterly impossible to do so. "I am all unnerved, doctor," she breathed, "give me something to brace me

up."

"Make the interview as short as possible," he ordered, "and go to bed as soon as it is over. You have not slept all night and your nerves are fearfully out of gear. Do not weep so helplessly, there is nothing to fear, I am here with you."

"Yes, I know," she whispered, "bend nearer so

that I can speak in your ear."

Mabel, at this time, out of earshot and unaware of the by-play, was on her way to a little alcove at the far end of the room, intent on getting her

notes to the post tray.

He bent above her and Leah entreated, "Watch Mabel, oh, watch her, watch her, she would have killed herself last night if I hadn't prevented it. Do not leave her any more dangerous medicine!"

"Was her husband with her last night?" the

doctor whispered.

"Yes, till four o'clock this morning," she answered, as the bell rang again.

Mabel took Leah's arm and went with her to

the reception room into which Dr. Traynell had been shown.

She stayed long enough to exchange a few pleasantries with him, then, at a sign from Leah,

she withdrew.

Dr. Traynell's eyelids had a pronounced droop and the corners of his eyes were drawn together sharply as he took in every detail of the tall black-robed figure that came forward so slowly and sank listlessly down in a rocker;—but the face with its strained eyes, brows furrowed and lips tightly compressed, gave no indication of weakness.

Peering intently into her eyes, with head thrust forward, as though life had but one thing in store for him,—and that he could not find,—he, too, for a moment set his teeth together and knitted his brows, but for a moment only; the next, his face was lit up by a smile, as her eyes grew moist.

"Leah, Leah, how beautiful you are in your weeds!" he exclaimed. "Fair as a lily, but just a trifle too pale, and your eyes are glistening with tears, they look as if you had shed many of them. I am sorry to see it, for I love you, Leah, but that's no news to you. I never could hide it, and it was for showing it too plainly that Ralph discharged me and forbade me the house."

"It was not for that," Leah retorted angrily, "it was for watching me as a cat does a mouse, and for saying you wouldn't hesitate to put him out of the road if you thought you had any chance with me. He told me so himself and gave me the

names of the men who heard you say it."

"He did, eh? Well, he put himself to a whole

lot of trouble for nothing." The doctor's nostrils dilated and his eyes glared, however, as he made the assertion.

"I've got you where I want you, my beautiful tigress," he continued, "and you'll give me what I've come here to ask for, or I'm out in my calculation."

He closed the sliding doors and pulled the portières together, then rolled a chair in front of Leah and sat down.

"You don't seem to be as perky as usual," he sneered, "not as cock-a-hoop as you were the last time I saw you, when you ordered me out of Mason Worrell's room. I left the room, I did; but I forgot to let the door catch, and when you were busy, I had it on a crack and heard through the curtain every word you uttered. What do you say to that, now?"

Leah did not answer. She had fainted.

The doctor saw it in an instant, and quickly put his hand in his pocket for a restorative he always carried about with him; but on second thought withdrew his hand again, empty, and knelt down so that he could embrace Leah. "At last I have a chance at your lovely hands and arms, your bosom, your neck, and your lips, my beautiful, beautiful Leah," he exulted. "How I love you! No wonder Ralph had heart disease. You are enough to give it to any man. One more taste of her lips and then she'll come to—she'll come to, and murder me if there's anything in reach to do it with. Fortunately there is not and here goes my last."

He laid his burning lips to hers and drew her back to life with them.

Leah opened her eyes and saw his hated face above her and felt his lips on her mouth. She would have screamed but the doctor put his hand over her mouth. "Don't make a noise," he cautioned, "or you will be sorry. You're in my power. I know that your father cheated at cards and was killed for it, and now I want you to marry me to keep my mouth shut or make me speak, for I also know that your father did not cheat, that Mason Worrell made it appear so to the others by a sleight-of-hand trick. I could clear your father's memory or blacken it still further: choose which it shall be."

Leah could not speak but looked at him with

imploring eyes, helplessly.

The doctor took her wrist in his hand. "Sit

up," he said, "and smell this."

He held something to her nose that made her sneeze, and she sat up straight.

"Will you marry me?" Dr. Traynell demanded

with a cynical smile.

"Give me a little time to think of it," Leah said at last. "I must have time to think."

"How much time?"

'Five or six months—six months."

"Six months? Well-er, I see no objection to that. I will give you six months. If at the end of that time you promise to marry me, I will clear your father's name by publishing to the world what Mason Worrell confessed on his death bed; if not, I'll publish the other thing. You may do as you please, but I hope that you'll marry me. I've had you in my arms to-day and kissed your hands, arms, neck and lips, and I long for more of you. You are sweet, Leah, and I will be a slave to you when once I am your husband. I know it. I am a strong man, but you are the woman to bend me, if you will. Think of me kindly, Leah, I love you."

"Miscreant," exclaimed Leah, fiercely, with her face on fire, "don't dare to come near me again

until the six months are up!"

"I won't," he rejoined, "you might cane me," and left.

Leah dragged herself back to the library. "Have you any more poison about you?" she inquired of Dr. Bob. "I want some."

"What for?" he asked, laying his hand on her

shoulder and looking deeply into her eyes.

"I want to kill myself! Oh, don't look at me.

I'm not fit to be looked at!"

"Sit down, Leah," said Mabel, coming forward. "Sit down, dear, and tell us what occurred between you and Dr. Traynell."

The doctor drew her to a couch and sat down

beside her and kept her hand in his.

"I fainted," she said forlornly, "when he told me he overheard all that was said that day, at the bedside of Mason Worrell, and he, the vampire, held me in his arms and kissed my hands and arms, my neck and my lips until I revived. I saw his face above mine the moment I came to, and felt his hateful lips on my mouth, and I want to die, I'm so hateful to myself."

"He shall answer to me for that," said Dr. Bob, passionately. "The miserable hound, to dare—to

dare behave thus with an unconscious woman! Don't distress yourself, L-Mrs. Wentworth, you can wash it all off; but what else did he say.

How ended the interview?"

"He wants me to marry him. Says that he will clear my father's name by letting the world know what Mason Worrell confessed on his death bed if I do so. If I do not, he will publish the other thing," and here her sobs shook her entire frame.

"And what did you say in reply, Leah?" Mabel

asked when the two friends grew calmer.

"I told him that I must have time to think of it. 'How much time?' he asked, and I said six months, but why I said it I don't know unless Ralph's letter suggested it. That fiend saw no objection to that,—and then he told me what he had done to me while I was unconscious, and oh, I am so ashamed, and so utterly miserable! Ralph, Ralph, you would not have left me to meet that fiendish wretch alone! You would have come with me and protected me from such pollution! Let me die, oh, let me die and join Ralph!"

"You shall never meet him alone again," Dr. Bob assured her earnestly, "if I live. As it is, we have six months to work in, and we'll drain the venom from his fangs or I'm much mistaken—the poisonous reptile! Go to bed now, Leah,—Mrs. Wentworth,—and I will call again this evening to see how you are. And you will keep your promise to me in that other matter, Mrs. Stan-

hope; will you not?"

"I will keep it," she answered, "do not fear."

Leah wearily threw herself back on the couch, a piteous wreck, and Mabel stayed beside her until the sleep of exhaustion overcame her.

#### XIII.

On leaving the Stanhope mansion, Dr. Russell made straight toward the Medico-Chirurgical Hospital, at Eighteenth and Cherry streets, where he knew Dr. Traynell to be due at that hour of the day, in the clinic, and met him almost face to face at the junction of the two streets.

"Hullo," called Dr. Traynell. "Coming to see

the new fever patient at the Medico-Chi?"

"I have come to see you," Dr. Bob hissed between his teeth, "and to punish you for what you did to Mrs. Wentworth. Take this, lascivious polluter of unconscious women!" giving him a blow in the chest that felled him to the pavement, and kicking him down again every time he tried to rise.

Traynell managed to get his pistol from his pocket, but before he could fire, Dr. Bob kicked the weapon out of his hand clear across the street, and gave him another dose of his previous punishment. "Now, sue me for this," he said, "if you have a mind to, and I will take a hand in the publishing business and give to the world Mrs. Wentworth's story of Dr. Traynell's manly prowess," and coolly stepping across the street, he picked up the pistol and carried it off with him.

That noonday happened to be a quiet one in the neighborhood of the Medico-Chi, and fortunately

the affair came off without the officious interference of bystanders or policemen-or the vitri-

olic comment of lawyers, later on.

Dr. Traynell picked himself up, and instead of going into the hospital, limped back to his office and treated his injuries. Bitter were his thoughts during the operation. That Dr. Bob should know of this interview with Leah so very soon after it had taken place led him to the conclusion that he was in the house during its progress, and that he should allude so boldly to her story argued that he was deep in her confidence.

But let Dr. Bob beware how he came in his way when the six months were over. Leah would be Mrs. Traynell,—of that he felt certain,—in order to clear her father's name if for no other purpose. She would be in his arms again, if not willingly, then the other way. He knew of a drug that would bend a woman to do a man's will and he would use it—ave, use it unsparingly, and

without hesitation.

Max's wrath when the news of the untoward episode would reach his ears, gave him no little anxiety, too, and so he kept himself out of his way for a few days.

But Max took no pains to look for him, satisfied as he was that Dr. Russell had punished him, not

lightly.

When Mabel returned from the cemetery with Leah, Max, alarmed at her feverish appearance, induced her to retire to her bedroom for a while, and the two prospective divorcees found themselves once more, tête-à-tête in their library.

"I am very anxious about Leah," Max began, "and I wish I had not allowed her to see that fiend alone. Dr. Bob met me at the League, and told me all about it. He has punished him as he deserves."

"How?"

"By nearly kicking him to death. That poor girl upstairs has worried herself sick, I know.
. . . By the way, Mabel, Mr. Severne is to be here to-morrow; then I am off until the expiration of the time required by the conditions of the case—until the decree of divorce has been handed down."

For a moment the silence was broken only by the labored breathing of the two actors in this prelude to a drama foreshadowed by such gloomy omens.

Max was the first to seek relief from the unbearable situation by rising from his chair and

pacing up and down the room.

"Should either of you," he resumed in a rather husky voice, "need a protector while I am gone, apply to Dr. Bob. He will not mind neglecting his fevers to serve you. I never saw him so worked up about anything as he is about Traynell's daring to kiss Leah; he fairly shook with emotion while speaking of it. He loves her, I can see it."

"You all love her," said Mabel, "and so do I. Dr. Bob will take good care of her during your

absence, and I can take care of myself."

"Max," said Mabel, when they were alone together in her room, "there is one request I wish to make of you. Arrange matters so that this house shall be mine after we are separated. I wish to reside in it."

"Oh. Mabel! In this house where you and I

have lived together for fourteen years?"

"Yes, no other will suit me as well."

"So be it," he sighed. "Is there anything else I can do for you?"

"No-yes, there is. I want Selim."

"My gallant hunter? But you have Marah."

"I want Selim, too." "You shall have him."

His thoughts after that were as gall and wormwood.

She meant to bring him here, to this same house to which he had brought her as a bride! She had even begged a horse for him, his horse, his noble Selim! Had she no shame? And was he a poor man, that he couldn't furnish her with a lodging away from this?—Oh, well, it would soon be over. After that wrench, he would tear himself away also from his friends and associates, and from the city he loved.

He went to sleep after he had made this resolution, and woke up in the night to find Mabel across his breast as if she had thrown herself there in perfect abandon; she was sobbing in her

sleep.

His mind still traveled in a circuit from himself to the other man. Would he humor Mabel as he had done, or would he dare to ill-treat her? Ill-treat Mabel, his love! He turned her head up toward him and gently kissed her, and kept his

lips on hers, catching the tremulous sighs and

sobs, until he fell asleep again.

Heavy was his heart next morning as he realized that this was the last time he would have her Greedily he kissed her, then gently laid her down and slipped away from her.

He ate his solitary breakfast—Leah had not come down this morning—and went out; nor did he return until three o'clock and then Mr. Sev-

erne was with him.

Mabel was alone. For an hour she was closeted with the lawyer, and, when he left, her face

was pale and her eyes red with weeping.

She went to where her husband waited in the library, and seating herself on his knee flung her arms about his neck and sobbed: "I wonder if you know how hard it is for me to part from you."

"Then why do it?" said Max, clasping her close. "Because I must," she answered. "It will be better-better for all of us. Good-bye, Max, it is hard to part from you, but do it I must, oror be miserable forever. Kiss me, kiss me a dozen times, then let me go."

Max kissed her twelve times, she returning each kiss, then he jammed his hat over his eyes

and left the house and the city.

He told no one where he was going, he did not know himself. His ticket said Chicago, but he got off the train many miles this side of the White City.

Mabel, when he was gone, threw herself on the floor in an agony of grief, and when she rose

again, she lavished kisses on the chair he had occupied.

"Max is gone," she said, when Leah returned

with Dr. Russell from a drive.

"Without bidding me good-bye," sighed Leah, sadly, "but perhaps he couldn't help it, my poor Maximilian."

"Did you keep your promise to me, Mrs. Stanhope?" the doctor asked when Leah had retired to take off her wraps.

"Yes," said Mabel, drearily, "I kept it."
Dr. Bob shook his head. "It is beyond my comprehension," he owned; "the comedy has turned to tragedy in my hands. If ever I was sure of anything in my life, I was sure that you loved your husband and that he loved you. could have sworn that you would never part, yet you have parted; it is sad, sad. I don't understand the married state, I guess. How a husband and wife could separate as you have done, is a mystery to me. Now, it is you who are applying for a divorce, tell me why do you do so?"

Mabel smiled. "He loves Leah," she said, and heaved a heavy sigh, "has loved her for eighteen years; and as she is now a widow, I free

him so that he can marry her."

"Great God!" the doctor gasped, "and they say there is no self-sacrifice these days! Does Leah

- know of this? Does she love him?"

"She knows only I have applied for a divorce, not my reason for doing so, and I wish her never to know it, doctor; it would make her unhappy. I love Leah and would have her life bright, as Ralph longed it should be. She loves Max devotedly as a friend and will soon learn to love him the other way when he asks her again to marry him."

"She shall not marry him! I say she shall not!

She was given to me."

Dr. Bob stood before Mabel, his head flung back, his eyes ablaze, his voice hoarse with earnestness.

"What do you mean?" she asked gently.

"I cannot explain," he answered; "but Leah, beautiful Leah, shall be my wife and no other man's. She is mine!" and he looked like a lion at bav.

"Max will have a powerful rival," Mabel thought as the doctor left her, "but he will win-Max will win: who could resist him a second

time!"

"Where is Dr. Russell?" Leah asked, looking about for him when she came down.

"Gone," said Mabel, abstractedly.

"My, but the men treat me shabbily!" Leah grumbled. "Not even with ordinary politeness! Mabel," she went on, after a pause, "shall I go to my own home now, or do you want me to stay with you until the divorce is granted?"

"You must stay with me, dear," Mabel an-

swered. "Don't leave me! I love you!"

"And I love you, Mabel, and my heart bleeds for Max. Not to see him about here, will seem as if they had carried him out as they carried Ralph. When I have been out there with him I feel comforted-but you cannot seek solace at Max's grave, think of it; and you have lived with him fourteen years! Why, you would not kick a dog out that would have been yours that long! I could beat you, Mabel, yet I love you! Poor Max, where are you? Where has he gone, Ma-

"I do not know," laconically.

"What? Didn't he tell you where he was going?"

"No."

"Nor me either! I wonder if he told the doctor. I will ask him to-night when he comes. He said he would drop in for a little while, after eight, but I guess he won't, having rushed off in that fashion just now. What will we do with ourselves to-night, Mabel? There's dinner, and only two women to eat it! I really don't see how I can exist without Max! Come on," and she linked her arm in Mabel's, "we'll make the effort anyway."

Leah ate heartily; Mabel very sparingly and she was glad when the meal was over and they could return to the snuggery. Here she could half sit, half lie, on a pile of pillows and think of Max,—but Leah took up the music book containing Max's compositions, and after looking through it till she came to what struck her fancy. brought it to Mabel and asked, "How does this go, on page 34? I never heard Max sing that."
"What is it?" Mabel inquired. "I can't see

it well over here away from the light."

"'Des Madchen's Klage.' I'll read it out to you, and then you can play it and sing it for me. I know it is sweet."

She read the lament of the maiden who lived

in the conviction that 'tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all, but she failed to interest her friend.

"What's the matter, love," she teased, "feel very, very blue? Say, Mabel, let's disguise our-

selves and go to the theatre."

"Not to-night, dear, I'd like to oblige you, and we could do it without being found out, but to-

night—I couldn't do it to-night."

'Ah, Mabel, if you would only let me persuade you. I am sure we would both be the better for it. Come on, Mabel, let's get ready and go."

Mabel languidly rose from her reclining position-whether to yield to Leah's wish or not will never be told,—just as Dr. Russell entered. Leah faced him guiltily.

"What were you two conspirators plotting?"

he inquired.

"Had you not appeared on the scene," answered Leah, boldly, "Mabel and I would have gone to the theatre to-night,—disguised, you know."

"Come here and sit down."

She took a seat on the same sofa with him.

"I want you to promise me solemnly, never to go anywhere at night without a male escort, nor you either, Mrs. Stanhope. You're in my charge, too,—I'm a regular squire of dames—and if you two desire to go anywhere to-night, or any night, I shall go with you. Will you promise?"

"I will," said Mabel.

"I will not," Leah exclaimed. "I will not bind myself to you or any other man to that extent; and I won't go with you to-night, just because you walked off in such a hurry before dinner."

Mabel heaved a sigh of relief. The doctor looked worried.

"But suppose," he went on desperately, "suppose Dr. Traynell should run across you at such a time—when you are alone and unprotected——"

"I give in," Leah stopped him, "and promise; but if I had a pistol or some other deadly weapon in my hand at the time, I would not be afraid of him. Do you know what I would like to do to him?"

"No, what is it?"

"I would like to give him a good caning. Nothing does a hound like that so much good as a cane."

Again the tiger was visible and Dr. Bob couldn't resist passing his hand over her face as if he were wiping something from it.

Leah looked at him in surprise.

"I was trying to rub that look off," he explained apologetically. "I can't bear to see you so ferocious."

She laughed.

"Ah, that's better," said the doctor, "you look absolutely savage when you frown, fierce and cruel,—and when you laugh—"

"Well, when I laugh?"
"You look like a baby."

As she went out into the hall with him, he abruptly drew to the curtains behind him and with eager haste kissed her twice on the mouth,

then he ran down the steps and out of the front door.

"Let Max Stanhope or any other man come between us and I'll kill him," he muttered savagely. "She was given to me. She is mine."

## XIV.

Max, dumb with misery, lying back in his seat, took no thought of where he was going until the conductor called out Columbus, the city in which resided Governor Fourfield. Then, remembering the standing invitation to pay him a visit, he left the cars on the impulse of the moment and drove to his residence.

The Governor was delighted. "I am glad to have you here in my lonely old house with me," he said. "But why did you not bring your wife with you, that dainty little article with the sweet blue eyes and the corn silk top knot? She's a little beauty, Stanhope, and you shouldn't have left her behind."

"She has applied for a divorce from me, Four-field."

"Great Heaven! You don't tell me so!" cried the Governor, starting to his feet. "What for? Couldn't you hit it together? Surely you didn't run after anything else when you had that lovely bit of china!"

"No, Joe, 'tis a case of a black-mailing soubrette, kept on hand for the purpose, of special officials hired to bear false witness, and capable counsel handsomely feed with a few months' time to do the work in. No, it is not I,—she loves another man, and wants to marry him."

"I beg your pardon, but I don't believe it, and don't you try to ram it down my throat! She loves another man? Not on your life, sir; why, she loves the ground you walk on and is as jealous as a Choctaw. Don't tell me! I say she loves you and is jealous of Leah, beautiful Leah, who is a widow now. And when a decent time has elapsed, I'm going East to ask her to become Governor's lady. Maybe she won't refuse me this time. How is she, the poor girl, all broke up over Ralph's death, I expect."

"She took it very hard, but is getting over it a little, she laughed some last night, not much."

"I should like to have been there, all the same, when she showed her crooked little grinders. Doesn't she look for all the world like a baby that you want to kiss or spank when she laughs?"

"She does," said Max, "but if you wish her to regard you in the light of a possible suitor for her hand, you had better put in your application early. Traynell has already proposed to her and there's yet another in the field."

"Traynell? That's the doctor who was with

Mason Worrell when he died, isn't it?"

"The same," said Max, and he told the Govern-

or of his conduct with Leah.

"The —— cur!" the Governor exclaimed in uncontrollable excitement. "I'd like to shoot him for that! Why didn't you chastise him for it?"

"Because another man got ahead of me and

kicked him all over the pavement for it."

"Good," said the Governor. "I should like to shake that man by the hand, who is he?"

"Dr. Robert Russell."

"I'll remember that name; my grandmother was a Russell. Say, care to help along in the spring

campaign out here?"

"No, Joe, I have dropped politics and everything else along with Mabel. I'm going on a big tear as soon as that thing is granted and she is married to the other."

"You won't if you stay out here with me, Stanhope. Nonsense, man, don't take it to heart like

that!"

Max, unable to answer, went to his room; and the Governor, in his study, with his elbows on his desk, had a very disagreeable subject to contemplate.

Max spent the most of his time while out West conning the Philadelphia papers, and one day he saw in the Ledger that the divorce was granted.

He showed the announcement to the Governor. "Seeing is believing, I suppose," said that gentleman, throwing himself back in his leathern armchair to look at Max, with the obnoxious paragraph under his finger, "but I would have gambled on it that her heart was all your own; that no other man had an inch of room in it,-and by gum, I believe it yet, and she shall have the benefit of the doubt until I see her second marriage published in the papers! There's some mistake somewhere, and you ought to be up and doing trying to find out where, instead of sitting about, moping as you do. Why, you're no more than a ghost of yourself, man; these last months have been hard on you. From now on I shall keep my eyes open; and I'll bet you that we see neither the announcement of Mabel's engagement nor the record of her second marriage in the papers inside of the next month. If she was in a hurry to get rid of you for the reason you mention, she will not delay much longer in giving some hint of a new alliance being in contemplation, or the fact of its actual accomplishment."

"I'll take you up, Fourfield," said Max. "No, sir," the Governor protested, "I'll win."

Every day for a month Max and the Governor looked over the society news for some mention of Mabel's engagement or through the marriage colunms for her notice, but no mention was made of her in any shape or form.

Said Max, "I don't know what to think about Mabel. I must know something about her. I

think I'll write to Leah."

"Write to Leah? Nonsense, man; write to the doctor or some other friend."

"Why?"

"Because your wife 'as used to be' is jealous of Leah."

"How can she be jealous when she never loved me and does love another man?"

"Who is the fellow?"

"I don't know. He must be one she's ashamed of."

"You never found out who it was?"

"I never did."

"Couldn't Leah tell you? She was her most intimate friend."

"She could not tell me. She did not know."

"Then depend upon it there never was another

fellow. Write to Dr. Russell and ask him if Mabel has any particular follower, and if he can't give you anything definite. Take the next train East and watch about yourself. I don't want to appear inhospitable, Max. You will give me credit, I know, for having a sincere affection for you and pleasure in your company. It might be the coachman or butler; such things do happen; pshaw, not with her; I say it again, she loves you and no other."

"I'll write to Dr. Bob," Max decided, "and see what comes of it."

"And I'll write to Leah and see what comes of it," Governor Fourfield resolved.

Both letters went out in that night's mail.

AFTER the divorce was granted Leah insisted on going to her own home. "I would not stay in this house now for anything," she said to Mabel, "I could not."

Mabel cried and clung to her and begged to be allowed to go with her. "I will stay in my room," she said, "out of the way; only let me be with you. I will kill myself if you leave me here

in this big house all alone."

Leah was perplexed. Why should Mabel be so anxious to live with her now that she was free from Max and could marry her lover and be with him as soon as she pleased? What should she do? She would ask Dr. Bob. "I will decide upon that to-night, Mabel," she finally said. "I do not think that it will be a wise arrangement as things now are. I am loyal to Max, you know. Dr. Bob will know what is best for us. I will speak to him about it this afternoon, and tell you to-night what he says."

So, when occasion offered, Leah opened up the subject by announcing to the doctor her intention of going back to her own home now that Mabel was divorced. "I cannot stay any longer with her," she averred. "I couldn't bear to see another

man in Max Stanhope's place."

"I don't think there is any likelihood of that shortly," he replied. "Mrs. Stanhope loved her husband too well to forget him lightly."

"She did not love him; she loves another man."

"Did she ever tell you that?"

"No; but she acknowledged to Max that she had a lover when she asked him to set her free."

"I don't understand it," said Dr. Russell, sigh-

ing, and stroking his chin thoughtfully.

'I told her this morning," Leah went on, "that I should leave her soon and go to my own home. She cried and begged me to take her with me; said she would stay in her room to be out of my way; what does she mean by that, I wonder, and what do you advise me to do?"

"Take her with you by all means."

"And let that man come to my house?"

"What man?" "Her lover."

"She hasn't a lover."

"But she said to Max she had a lover."

"She may have said that but she has none. Take my word for it. She loved no man but her husband."

"Then why should she say that to him and break

his heart? Poor dear fellow!"

"She was divorced from her husband so that he could marry another woman. She sacrificed herself for her husband and friend."

"Are you in your right senses, sir? I'm her

friend, you know."

"And you are the woman she thinks will marry Max. But you shall not marry him."

"What have you to do with it, pray?"

"You were given to me."

"Let us go home. I want to get back to Mabel as soon as I can, and won't you please make it your business to find out where Max is? He must come back to Philadelphia as soon as ever he can. Find out where he is and wire him that I want him."

"You are not going to marry him. Do you hear me?"

"I will do as I please about that."

"Then he may stay where he is until kingdom come," Dr. Bob said to himself, "for all I'll do to fetch him."

The two women were now established in Leah's house, and she exerted herself to make the time pass pleasantly for both, but there was still no news of Max.

One night she happened to think of Mr. Severne, and concluded to call on him the next morning for the much-desired information.

There was no need for that. The morning post

brought her Governor Fourfield's letter.

It began as follows:

"DEAR BEAUTIFUL LEAH:—Max Stanhope is here with me—"

She read no further but with it open in her hand, ran into Mabel's room. "Mabel! Mabel!" she cried. "Max is found. He is with Governor Fourfield, and you must telegraph him to come back to you immediately. Do you hear, you foolish thing, who sent and turned adrift a husband

who loved you, not me, aye and loved you ever since you became his wife! Could not you see it? I guess not; we are all moles occasionally; I

couldn't see that you loved him either."

Mabel, who was still in bed after a restless night, rubbed her eyes and stared at Leah. "What is it you say?" she asked dreamily, "that Max loves me and not you? Is that a letter from him in your hands?"

"No," Leah answered, "it is from Governor

Fourfield. Max is with him."

"Let me see it!"

"Here it is; I haven't read it myself yet, except the first sentence."

Mabel devoured the letter, and returning it to her friend threw herself back on her pillow with such a peal of joyful laughter as Leah had not heard for a long, long time.

"You had better retire to your room," she said, "that's the only place to savor a billet-doux at

ease."

#### XVI.

LEAH, half offended, was not slow to comply and began right from the first line again:

"Dear Beautiful Leah:—Max Stanhope is here with me and informs me that poor Ralph made you over to a certain Dr. Robert Russell: now the said Dr. Robert Russell shall not have you, for I want you. Once again I ask you to marry me; and something tells me you won't refuse me this time. I love you, Leah; have loved you for eighteen years; will you say 'no' to the doctor and 'yes' to me when the six months are up?

"Send me just one word, 'yes,' or 'no.' If it is 'yes,' I will fly to you. If you send me a 'no'—but I feel you will not, and so will say nothing

about it.

"Stanhope feels terribly the parting from his wife. He is worn to a shadow. It is pitiful to see him scanning the papers day by day for the announcement of Mabel's engagement to the other man or the notice of her marriage to him.

"I cannot understand it; but I am just as sure as that I am sitting here writing to you that Mabel Stanhope loved her husband and was jealous of

you.

"Try hard to find out who the other man is—
if there is another, which I still doubt. There is a
mistake somewhere; of that I am convinced, in
spite of the fact that she told her husband that
she had a lover. Ask her point blank 'Do you love
Max, or do you love another man?' and send me
her answer. I would do much to bring peace to
his heart.

"He does not love you, Leah, except as a friend, but I love you sincerely, passionately. Bear that in mind when you send me your answer, and let it be 'yes,' I pray you.

"Joseph Fourfield."

"Governor Fourfield, eh?" Leah said to herself, when she had come to the end. "I'll think it over, my dear sir, and after the doctor has

spoken will send you your message."

She smiled into the mirror before which she was sitting in a pleased way. "There is hope for me yet," she thought, "when men like Dr. Bob and the Governor, to say nothing of that cur, Traynell, declare they are anxious to wed me, and I have not been a widow for quite six months yet. Hm, 'Governor's Lady' doesn't sound so bad! But I have not settled with Dr. Traynell yet. He will come for an answer soon now,—and—I guess I'll let Governor Fourfield give it to him. Now for Mabel."

Mabel had sent her husband the message: "Come back to me," and received the reply: "All right," and she was as bright and as sparkling as a sunlit pond-lily. "I am going home to-day, Leah," she announced at breakfast; "home, and

you must not come with me. Alone I shall meet him on the threshold, my dear one! Why, here comes Dr. Bob; what brings him here so early?"

"May I see you alone, please," he said to Mabel, as soon as he entered; and there was a sheepish something about his demeanor which did not pass unnoticed.

"Mrs. Stanhope," he said, when he found him-self alone with her, "I have a message to deliver to you and afterward a confession to make to you."

"Is it from Max?" she exclaimed.

"It is," he answered. "Here is a note I received from him this morning.

"My DEAR FRIEND:-I have been here with Governor Fourfield since I left Philadelphia, searching the papers day by day for news of Ma-

bel--you know what I mean.

"Kindly let me know, at once, the date set for her marriage and the name of the man. Go right to her and ask her; I must know. How I loved her God and Leah alone know. Wire, I can't wait for a letter."

"May I keep this note?" she begged, holding it close to her heart.

Dr. Bob nodded.

"He will be here to-night," Mabel continued. "This is not the first news I have had of him today. Leah received a letter from Governor Fourfield in the early mail, and I have wired Max to come back to me! Is it not glorious, the news that he loves me? But you always said he did and insisted on it, till I told you I had divorced him so

that he could marry Leah. You have been a

changed man since then."

"I know it, Mrs. Stanhope. I did not want him to take Leah from me. Leah, some weeks ago, begged me to find Max for her, after I had mentioned to her the fact that you had sacrificed yourself for your husband and friend. I couldn't bear to have her leave you; to think you had a lover-and I must own the truth, Mrs. Stanhope, I never moved a finger to find him. It is the first time in my life that I have acted dishonorably; but I love Leah, and did not know that she was anxious to find him for you. I see it plainly now, bat that I am, but I thought she wanted him for herself; forgive me, won't you?"

"I forgive you freely, Dr. Bob, I am too happy to-day to harbor resentment; as to Leah, I cannot tell; she has peculiar ideas about honor. Suppose you don't let her know that you made no effort to find Max until after—until after you have asked her to marry you. You have more than one stumbling block in your way as it is. Governor Fourfield's letter contained a proposal of

marriage."

"Governor Fourfield!"

"Ves."

"Neither Governor Fourfield nor any other man shall have her! Ralph Wentworth gave her to me! She is mine!"

The doctor arose from his chair and walked

excitedly up and down the long apartment.

Mabel followed him with her eyes until he returned to his seat, then she said firmly: "Dr. Russell, Leah does not love you."

"She loved me once, dolt that I am, she loved me once!" he answered.

"But she does not now."

"She shall love me again. She learned to love

Ralph Wentworth."

"Yes, but it took her eighteen years," sighed Mabel, "and it took me fourteen to find out that Max loved me and not her. How dull and stupid and blind are the best of us! But we two will be happy now! Come to the snuggery to-night and sit a while with Leah."

The doctor grew calmer. The red flush of vexation on his face gave place to the pale dawn of

hope.

"Where shall I find her?" "In the parlor, I think."

A few moments later he stood embarrassed before her.

"Well?" she queried.

"I want to acknowledge to you," he replied slowly, "that I never troubled myself a single second to find out the whereabouts of Max Stanhope. I received a letter from him this morning, which makes this confession of mine imperative."

"Where is the letter?"

"His wife has it." "What was in it?"

"I can't repeat it word for word, but he states that he has been with Governor Fourfield since he left the city and he desires me to send him the date set for Mabel's second marriage and the name of the man she is to marry—he knows it all by this time, I guess. The concluding sentence 'How I

loved my wife God and Leah alone know' opened

up to me a whole fountain of knowledge."

Leah looked curiously at him. "What is it you know now that you were ignorant of before you read that sentence?" she asked.

"I know now," the doctor answered briefly, "that you wished me to find Max Stanhope not for

vourself but for Mabel."

"Well, for the densest brain-boxes that e'er came out of Nature's mills, 'My country 'tis to thee' the prize belongs!" half-chanted Leah, as she thrust into the doctor's buttonhole a stem of magnolia she had just brought in from the garden. Either the stem was too thick or the buttonhole too small; her two hands had to be called into requisition. The opportunity was too tempting to be missed, and before Leah's task was accomplished, Dr. Bob's lips held her fingers captive.

"What is that for?" she asked.

"I want to thank you for not scolding me, and for the flower, too."

"What would I scold you for?"

"For not finding Max Stanhope for you."

"That was shabby of you, sir; but let it pass. Governor Fourfield had him all the time. I received a letter from the Governor this morning, but sit down. Can't you stay a little while?"

He took a chair beside her. "Will you let me

see the letter?" he asked.

"What interest have you in it?"

"He asked you to marry him in that letter."

"He did," Leah replied with as much emphasis as the doctor had put in his statement.

"And what will be your answer?"

"I do not know yet."

"You know that you belong to me, do you not?" Leah raised her eyes on a level with his. "I belong to nobody," she said, "now that Ralph is gone."

"But he gave you to me."

"I think not."

"He made me promise to ask you to marry me at the expiration of six months from the time of his death."

"Had he much difficulty in obtaining that prom-

ise, Dr. Bob?"

"He had at first."

#### XVII.

LEAH's tears now flowed freely.

"And what did you think after you had left him?"

"I thought that I had better not let my mind stray in your direction while he lived."

"And after he died?"

"After he died, I looked upon you as the woman destined to become my wife, a sacred trust left in my keeping, as mine to have and to hold until

death do us part."

"Dr. Bob, suppose you really had me, that I was in fact your wife, how could you trust me? I would flirt the same as I did while Ralph lived, and might run across another Dr. Bob, who would touch my heart as you did. You touched it, that is all. You did not grasp it and hold it, and it is likely that you never will. The seeds I cast fell on a rocky soil when I gave you that bit of my heart."

"I was an honest man, Leah, and I hope that I Leah was apparently in no Byronic mood. am one still, though you are enough to lead a man through paths of wickedness into Hades.yet, 'without thee, where would be my heaven?'" "Have you said all you want to say to me this "None where you are concerned, Dr. Bob." morning?" she asked with a tinge of irony in her voice.

"No, I want to ask you to marry me: will you?"
"I will not, Dr. Russell," was the stern reply.

"But Ralph said you should, at the end of six months! Have the wishes of the dead no power

over you?"

"Leah, Leah," the doctor cried, impulsively grasping her hands and holding them firmly, "you are mine and I love you. Look into my eyes and see if I do not."

She looked at him. "You are dangerous," she

said, "release me."

"Not until you promise to marry me." And now he had drawn her to her feet and his arms encircled her.

"The six months are not up yet, quite; you are speaking too soon," Leah said in a decided tone.

Dr. Bob persisted: "Leah, Leah, give me back just the bit of your heart I once held! The seeds you cast did not fall on a rocky soil when you gave it to me; you had my love then as you have it now. I kept it within bounds, that is all. Give it back to me, do!"

"I cannot, Dr. Bob, it is gone from you; yet, I am fond of you in a way. It hurts me to see you so excited and miserable. I want to comfort

you."

"Do that for me, Leah, and I will bless you all my life."

Leah and Mabel were at the Stanhope mansion early in the afternoon of that fateful day.

As prearranged, Dr. Russell, though pale and distressed looking, reported for dinner, after which he begged to be excused on the plea of a professional call, until eight o'clock.

"Doctor," said Mabel, as he was leaving, "that magnolia you are wearing has lost its freshness. Throw it away and let me give you another; ours

are in bloom."

Dr. Bob looked at Leah, and laid his hand caressingly on the blossom as he answered, "I could not throw away this flower, Mrs. Stanhope, it is too precious."

"But it is wilted; here, give it to me, since you value it so highly, and let me put it in water

for you, to freshen it up."

He smiled significantly as he unpinned it from his lapel, and said, as he handed it to Mabel, "It is wilted, as you say; let it regain vigor."

Leah understood him, but Mabel was puzzled, and as soon as they were left alone she asked the meaning of the doctor's smile in connection

with his comment on the magnolia.

"He asked me to marry him to-day," Leah explained, "when I came in from the garden and pinned the magnolia blossom on his coat. The flower, he wishes me to understand, is emblematic of my love for him. It has wilted, he wants it revived."

"You refused him then, Leah?"

"Yes."

"And you are going to accept Governor Four-field."

"I am."

"Did you really ever love Dr. Bob as he sup-

poses you did?"

"I think so, yes. He touched my heart, and if he had given me the slightest encouragement, there's no knowing how it might have ended. We are like wild beasts, the pair of us; he has the ferocity of the wolf. I that of the tiger. Between Dr. Bob and Dr. Travnell I will have my hands full, Mabel; 'thar'll be trouble in de camp,' I guess, but the Governor is gallant and brave and he loves me."

"But you do not love him, Leah. It will be with you and him as it was with you and Ralph."

"Precisely; and is it not a wise life for a married woman to lead? Was I not happy with Ralph before I learned to love him? He made my life bright and loved me. That is what the Governor will do also. I shall have a good time and be allowed to flirt with whom I please; but will you, I wonder, ever flirt again?"

"Never again," said Mabel, solemnly.

"Then you will be a dull old woman. How the swains will miss you, and how our set will laugh at you,—behind your back, of course."

"I shan't mind, I will have Max."

"And haven't you had him for fourteen years. pray?"

"I have had him that long, yes, but I thought

he loved you."

"All that time?"

"All that time. He told me before we were married that he loved you and when I saw you for the first time together, I thought that he loved you still."

# 134 Leave Me My Honor.

"And would have given him to me, you foolish, foolish Mabel! But, tell me, how could you spend all these years with him without telling him that he had your heart? That would have brought out a revelation of his real sentiments, I fancy. You told me, if I remember rightly, that you married him without love."

"So I did, but I love him now, and oh, how I long for his return! How slowly the hours drag along to-day! Do they not seem to grudge me the happiness my heart craves for?"

### XVIII.

"I WILL go down now," said Mabel, "and wait for Max in the reception hall, and when the cab stops, I will meet him on the threshold." Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes sparkled with anticipated bliss.

At last, from her watching post in the hall she heard the rattle of a cab down the street, then the driver's "whoa," the slamming of a carriage door,

and at last his steps on the marble stoop.

"Max, Max," she cried as he crossed the threshold, and she dropped in his arms, overcome with emotion.

He put her down and with his arm about her walked up the stairs with her to the snuggery.

"My own Maximilian!" said Leah, as she flew

to meet him.

"Leah, the beautiful!" he exclaimed. "How

glad I am to see you again!"

Max shook hands with the doctor, then turned to Mabel again and took her in his arms, which was a broad hint that he had no time for anybody else just then.

The doctor and Leah smiled at each other as they hastily left the room, the doctor with the

magnolia in water in his hand.

"My poor Mabel, how bravely she bore up to the very last," remarked Leah. "Her eyes did not leave Max a moment while he was kissing me and shaking hands with you, and he counted the time wasted until he could get back to her. So fearfully thin he is, poor Maximilian! But he will be happy now and so will Mabel. It is only I who will be lonely and sad."

"Not necessarily," said Dr. Bob cheerfully. "There is nothing to prevent our going with them to Camden as early as possible to-morrow morning—this morning rather—and being married

with them."

Leah laughed. "When I marry again," she said, "if ever again I do anything so foolish, it will be with bells ringing, whistles blowing, bands playing, people shouting, and it will not be in Camden.'

Dr. Bob stared gloomily into space and said

nothing.

Leah put her hand on his shoulder. "You and I, Robert Russell, will be dear friends always,"

she said, "nothing more."

Still the doctor spoke not, but now glared at the magnolia, which stood on the table before him in all its waxen beauty, for it had opened wide its dainty petals.

Leah looked, too, and bent over it and inhaled

its fragrance.

"You think," she said, "that the love I once bore you will come back." There was hope in his glance. "If it does," and here her voice dropped and faltered, "it will make me very unhappy or utterly reckless, for I should be another man's wife, very probably, at that time. You do not answer?"

"I cannot, Leah!" and he laid his head on his arms but could not hide his deep emotion from her.

It was the first time Leah had seen a strong man in his agony give way to woman's weakness,

and it affected her strangely.

"Dr. Bob," she pleaded, taking his head in her arms, "do not give way in that fashion! You are bitterly disappointed, I know; but do not let it break your heart! If I loved you, I would marry you as Ralph desired me to, but I do not. Yet I love to be with you and it kills me to see you miserable. There, there, don't let that wolfish look creep into your eyes, it frightens me! 'Make her life bright,' said Ralph; 'it would be very dark if she lost your friendship.' And now look up, be alive, responsive, smile at me with your eyes as well as your lips. Your eyes are beautiful when they are kind. I do not—I do not like them so intent and cold and sad."

"I am sorry you noted my distress," he said, "but Leah, Leah, it will kill me if you leave me! I love you and have done so from the first, though my pride and my manhood would not allow me to acknowledge it even to myself! Shall I prove it to you? See this." And from his breast he drew a pocket-case in which a large linen handkerchief lay carefully folded. "Here is the handkerchief with which I wiped away your tears," he

explained.

There are coincidences in the feelings of human beings that no philosopher can account for or would explain if he could; and thus it came to pass that Leah and her lover, like two pieces of

machinery moved by one and the same spring, proceeded to the blissful haven where two wrecked hearts were relishing their escape from the storm.

"All quiet along the Potomac," the doctor whispered, and he beat the devil's tattoo on the door.

"All right," came from inside, and after a short delay, the door opened to them. "What have you two been up to?" asked Max, curiously. look as though you had been enjoying yourselves."

"And do you know what you two look like?" the doctor retorted. "You look guilty-oh, I wasn't going to accuse you of anything but murdering sleep for each other," he quickly added as he saw a faint blush on Mabel's face; "I'll bet you a silver candlestick, colonial pattern, against the glass that holds this magnolia"-for he still had the flower and its holder with him-"that neither one of you will close your eyes in sleep for the rest of the night: and to-morrow you'll be the greenest couple that ever went to Camden to get married. I wish Leah would marry me there, too, to-morrow; it is my birthday, you know."

"What does Leah say to that?" Mabel asked

anxiously.

"She says 'no,' but I shall not give her up so easily; if not to-morrow, then it shall be some other day. Come on now, my young man, it's time to go home. Turn your back to us and bid your lady love good night. And when that's over. turn about face! left foot forward, march!"

"You are happy now, my dear Mabel," said Leah, kneeling down beside her when the men had gone, "and I am indeed delighted. You were so miserable, my poor little birdie; another month without him would have brought you to the grave. He, too, is pale, and worn to a shadow; his eyes could not leave you as he walked to the door. 'Tis good to be so loved!"

"Why, how about you, my Leah? Are you not loved, too? Dr. Bob worships you, I know, and

Governor Fourfield adores you, Max says."

"So? Anything more about the Governor?"

"He can neither eat nor sleep for thinking of you. Have you sent him your answer?"

"Not yet. I will send it to-morrow."

"And what will it be?"
"It will be 'yes."

## XIX.

AFTER the first half hour of happy reunion, Max and Mabel began to talk things over a little.

"And you thought I loved Leah all the time!"

he sighed, breaking a long silence.

"Yes," she replied, "I did. You told me of your love for Leah before we were married, you remember, but I did not love you then and so did not care—"

"But I loved you," he interrupted her with sudden passion, "the moment I saw you. It was at the Assembly Ball in Baltimore, and you flirted with me outrageously! 'There's a girl after my own heart,' I thought, 'a little beauty and a great flirt;' and I determined from that night to give you no peace till you married me. You told me that you did not love me when I asked you to become my bride, but Leah did not love Ralph either, and they lived happily. I was glad to get you on any terms!"

"I did not care about your past because I did not love you," Mabel reiterated, "but I had no sooner become your wife than you had all my heart, every passionate fibre of it. I loved you as devotedly as you did me and looked forward to the happiest kind of a life spent by your side. The next day you took me to see the Wentworths: and then you kissed Leah as you had never kissed me before. I felt sure you still loved her, and made up my mind then and there, never to let you

see how dear you were to me."

"So it was that kiss that cost me fourteen years of torture," mused Max, "it was a dear price to pay for it. Well, well, how small a thing may turn joy to sadness! I was happy with my bride and glad to see my friends again after a long absence; and so, when I greeted Leah, I gave her the kiss I knew she liked best. And that's all there was about it! We were happy enough, Mabel, until Ralph died. Then you got the crazy crotchet into your head to give me up to Leahand it nearly broke my heart when you asked me to let you have this house, to which I had brought you and in which you had lived with me as my wife for fourteen years. And don't you think it was mean of you, sweetheart, to allow me to think you had a lover, to let me be with you day after day, and night after night, and believe that you looked on me only as his substitute? It's beyond comprehension how cruel a woman can be!"

"I never called any one 'lover' to you, Max, I merely spoke of the man I loved, and if you chose to take it up the other way, it was your fault that you suffered. I own I was cruel, and now I am sorry; but don't you think you were enough to drive me insane with your 'dying Leah's lover in Leah's arms'? What did you mean by it? Once you said: 'Ah, to die Leah's lover in Leah's arms,' and another time, after Ralph's death: 'Ralph, Ralph, to die Leah's lover in

Leah's arms."

"Why, darling of mine, those were the words spoken to me by Ralph himself. One day he asserted to me that he would be willing to die upon the spot 'Leah's lover in Leah's arms.' The saying made a deep impression, and when he actually died in that very way, my mind was full of it. And how else could it be when the sentiment was expressed in answer to a previous remark of my own, to the effect that I would be willing to give half of what I own to be your chosen lover for one whole day and night."

"And you have been my chosen lover for fourteen years, Max, and you are my chosen lover

now."

Max's only answer was a shower of kisses; and it was just then the devil's tattoo had sounded on the door.

Next morning at ten o'clock Max and Dr. Bob called for the ladies and took them across the Delaware to the house of a notorious clergyman in Camden where Max Stanhope and Mabel Morris were made man and wife again in short order; and thanks to the ubiquitous newspaper reporter, thanks to some political friends that Stanhope chanced upon on the ferry boat, the happy event was given to the public almost as soon as it had taken place.

Nor was it long ere the reunited pair opened their house again and gave a wedding reception at which Leah Wentworth made her appearance together with the announcement of her speedily approaching marriage with Governor Fourfield of Ohio.

# XX.

GOVERNOR FOURFIELD received his "yes" and came to Philadelphia as quietly as possible on Saturday afternoon so as to be with Leah on her

birthday.

"How glad I am, Stanhope," the Governor said as they were rolling down Broad Street, "that you are happy once more. You were in a fair way of worrying yourself to death out there! And Leah, how does she look? Say, old man, the journey seemed endless!"

"She is bright and beautiful and happy, and is waiting for you at my house," Max answered.

"The young doctor, how does he take it?"

"Badly enough. He wants me to take you to his office this morning, but if I were in your place I wouldn't go."

"Why not?"

"Because he is like a wild beast in his anger and disappointment."

"Have you any idea that I am afraid of him?"

"Certainly not; but he is reckless of consequences and might cause trouble and scandal."

"I shall go to the doctor's, notwithstanding."

Leah was radiant in a gown of white silk crepe, with heavy designs of white lace, when she ap-

peared before the Governor in Mabel's drawing room.

Mabel was there, too, but stayed only long enough to make her welcome cordial and to give a

pretext for her early withdrawal.

The Governor was at last alone with his love and anxious to improve the occasion. "Leah, Leah," he breathed, "mine at last, come to my heart!"

With all apparent willingness she yielded to his embrace and his ardent caresses; then taking a seat by his side, "Governor Fourfield," she began.

"My name is Joseph to you, my love."

"My dear Joseph, then, I want to tell you—to make it clear to you, that though I wired you that 'yes' I do not really love you. I wish to become the Governor's wife, to rule socially in your gay capital. I like you, however; have always done so, and will try to make you happy. Do you take me on those terms?"

"On any terms, my darling, so that I get you. For eighteen years you have never been entirely out of my mind, and that night at the Academy, I was almost afraid to dance with you, for fear that I might, in a treacherous moment, become a villain and give way to my passion for you—and since then, my love, my love, I have been nearly distracted! A very frenzy of longing possessed me to be near you, and I would have come to you immediately after Ralph died had I not been ashamed to do so. Max Stanhope was a god-send to me. He satisfied me by speaking of you. Let me kiss you again, you dazzling, distracting, delicious morsel! No, don't stop me yet, I want to

crowd as many as I can into the few hours I shall have with you—I leave again to-morrow night, you know."

"Can't you stay longer?"

"No, I would be missed, and nobody is to know of this visit. You will be ready to marry me in a few weeks, I presume? Or would you rather wait the year out? Or would you,—O seelenfroher Einfall!—marry me at once and come back with me!"

"Ralph wanted me to marry Dr. Bob Russell six months after his death," Leah made answer. "I will marry you in June, the month of roses."

"Any arrangement suits me," he acquiesced heartily, "so that I get you. If I consulted my own feelings in the matter, the wedding would come off to-morrow, which is your birthday, by the way, and I have brought you something in honor of the occasion."

He took a little box from his vest pocket and presented it to her, and when she had thrown back its white velvet lid there glistened before her the handsomest ring she had ever beheld; a diamond crescent, formed over a single white stone of rarest beauty and sparkling brilliancy.

"This is exquisite," said Leah, slipping it on her

finger, "and it fits exactly."
"So will the other one."

"What other one?"

"The engagement ring. It is an opal set in brilliants in the design of a Roslyn rose with petals unfolding, and it could not be finished in time for me to bring it. Consequently, I will not have the pleasure of placing it on your hand.

You must put it on yourself when it arrives, but I'll have my turn when I slip on the wedding circlet—the wedding ring, Leah, think of it, which will bind you to me till death."

This man's love was a great love. Leah appreciated it and wished in her heart that she might

return it.

"What made you so sure of me?"

"The ruby you see in my scarf pin. One day, Stanhope had been telling me of the way in which Ralph's dearest wish had been gratified: and as I sat thinking of you, it flashed into my eyes, and looking more closely, I saw that it glowed like fire and sparkled, which for me always means success in a venture. The ruby is dull and lustreless most of the time, and when disaster confronts me, it gets pale, almost white."

"How curious! Where did you get it?" Leah asked, with eyes intently fixed upon it, and did she imagine it?—for a single instant the ruby turned white then burned and sparkled redder

than ever.

"A grateful old Indian woman gave it to me," the Governor replied, "for pardoning her son, who was lying in the jail at Columbus, when I was inaugurated. She said it would bring me luck up to my forty-sixth year. I am past fortyfour now. She told me my fortune too, the old squaw did."

"Oh, did she? What did she tell you?" Fortunes were a weakness with Leah though she did

not altogether believe in them.

"She told me, Leah the curious, that I was a great chief of the nation and would marry a squaw rich and beautiful, but she was doubtful of there ever being any pappooses in my wigwam."

A peculiar expression came to Leah's face.

which the Governor interpreted his own way.

"I can do without pappooses," he said, "if I have you, Leah. But tell me about the young doctor. He took it seriously, Max tells me, when

you refused him."

"Yes," she answered, sadly. "When I told him that I had wired you the 'yes'-which was on Wednesday after we had come back from Camden, he ground his teeth in rage and swore that no other than himself should have me."

"Well, I'll be damned! Excuse the expression,

my dear, I couldn't help it."

Max came in just then. "Well," he said, "have you two settled your business affairs? You have been long enough about it."

"Everything is settled," the Governor answered

pleasantly.

"When does it come off?"

"Early in June," Leah answered.

Max threw up his hands.

"Well, Madame Smartee, you are not married yet, there are still the two doctors to reckon with!"

"The two doctors? Why, I am done with Dr.

Bob."

"So you are: I forgot that."

"And I shall settle with Dr. Traynell to-morrow," the Governor chimed in. "Leah received a note from him yesterday, she tells me, reminding her that his six months will be up to-morrow, and I advised her to send him a message inviting him here for three o'clock in the afternoon. I will receive him."

"And I will be with you," Max asserted.

want to see the fun."

"Yes, Max," Leah coaxed, "you be there too! I am nervous about that interview. He is a treacherous serpent to deal with—but here comes Mabel in her new dinner dress which looks like a cloud that one sees in a dream. Isn't she lovely, Governor Fourfield? You'd never think to look at her now that she could ever be a rollicky Bohemian of my own type, would you."

'She looks like sweet eighteen," said the Governor, gallantly, "and so do you, Leah; I wonder

what keeps you folks so young?"

"The mischief we indulge in," Leah answered. "What I wonder at is when they're going to serve dinner to-night? They are late with it, aren't they. Mabel?"

"What's her hurry now!" Max whispered audibly to Fourfield. "There's something at the back

of it."

A toss of her head, a tug at a fold in her dress. a face at her questioner, and a peal of laughter:

and Max had his answer.

"There she goes," said the Governor, "showing all her teeth and looking so exactly like a baby that I must needs have her in my arms for a minute; excuse me, won't you?" and the big man picked up his fiancée as though she were an infant in long clothes, and there is no knowing how long Love would have had its way, had not the Governor's eyes suddenly glanced toward the windows. "Gosh! It just struck me what a nice snap shot we would have made for an enterprising reporter on a Sunday paper if the blinds had been up! 'The Governor of Ohio and Mrs. Wentworth of Philadelphia in an interesting pose.' Wouldn't that make a hit, eh?"

The curtains were all down, fortunately: no reporter was in the street peeping through the cracks; and they adjourned to dinner with easy

minds.

### XXI.

LEAH sat down to the piano and played a lively march of her own. The Governor turned the leaves as accurately as his admiration for the player permitted, and, at the conclusion of the piece, asked his host if he could oblige him with the ballad of Bouillabaisse.

There was no need to ask him twice, and promptly the well known verses fell from his lips:

"A street there is in Paris famous For which no rhyme our language yields— Rue Neuve des Petits Champs its name is-The New Street of the Little Fields; And here's an inn, not rich or splendid, But still in comfortable ease. The which in youth I oft attended. To eat a bowl of Bouillabaisse.

"This Bouillabaisse a noble dish is; A sort of soup, or broth, or brew, Or hotchpotch of all sorts of fishes That Greenwich never could outdo: Green herbs, red peppers, smelts, saffern, Soles, onions, garlic, roach and dace; All these you ate at Terre's tavern In that one dish of Bouillabaisse."

And so on with the eight remaining stanzas, down to the closing apostrophe:

"Welcome the wine, whate'er the seal is; And sit you down and say your grace With thankful heart, whate'er the meal is-Here comes the smoking Bouillabaisse."

"Bravo," the Governor applauded, "you have remembered every word, and how well you still recite, Max, my dear old comrade; but as to that you do well everything you undertake."

Thus the evening was passed agreeably among the friends, varied occasionally by sweet music

and reminiscent converse.

None of the four went to church next day. The Governor's appearance there would have made his presence in the city known and the rest did not care to go without him.

"I hate to have that Traynell business on my hands to-day," the Governor said after luncheon, "but it must be done to-day. I can give no other

time to it."

Punctually at three o'clock the doctor's ring sounded and he came in, jaunty and smiling, expecting to meet Leah in the parlor. Instead of her two men confronted him, with stern faces.

The smile fled from his countenance when Max introduced the Governor, and mentioned the fact that he was one of the three who had played that night with Colonel Emmet and Mason Worrell. He put on a bold front, however, and asked for Mrs. Wentworth.

"I am her representative," the Governor blurted out, "and her answer to you is that she will not accept your proposal."

"She will not?" the doctor fumed. "Then I publish to the world that her father was a cheat!"

"Not so fast, my dear sir; her father was not a cheat, and you know it. Publish what you please, however, and directly after, Stanhope and I will come out with a press statement giving full knowledge of the whole affair over our signatures. That will have some weight, I fancy, and we have in our hands the sworn statement of the detectives Ralph Wentworth had with him on the day he forbade you his house. Dr. Traynell will then find this city too hot for him, I imagine."

Traynell was silent. A frown darkened his

brow and his face grew livid.

A considerable interval was allowed him for re-

flection; then the Governor spoke again:

"Should you, on the contrary, reconsider your decision and oblige us by giving to a newspaper reporter Mason Worrell's confession that he had tricked us into believing the Colonel a cheat, we are prepared to pay you a large sum of money, and will keep our knowledge of your private character to ourselves. You will also by that means escape the punishment you richly deserve and which otherwise I will mete out to you, libidinous scoundrel, for your treatment of the woman who has done me the honor to accept my suit and will be my wife in a very few weeks."

"What!" exclaimed the doctor, galvanized by surprise, "Leah marry you in a few weeks? I car not believe it. I am all unprepared—I must have

time-time to digest it. I will give you my an-

swer three days hence."

"You shall give it to us here and now," the Governor retorted, fixing him with a glance of his eye so full of menace that he shrunk from it; still he tightened his lips and looked obstinate.

"Now is the time," Max added, "for your answer to our proposal; and if it comes in the nega-

tive, you know the consequences."

"This day is Sunday," the unprincipled man protested in a voice that was somewhat unsteady.

"Precisely, but we cannot help that," Max replied with decision. "In five minutes the Governor begins on you, and when he is done with you I shall have my turn; and after that perhaps Dr. Russell might care to have another kick at what's left."

"You wouldn't kill me, would you," the doctor said with a sneer, glancing jerkily from one to the other of the stern faces before him, "for—for taking a few kisses and—"

The Governor's coat was off in an instant.

"Put it on again," pleaded the coward, "I accept your proposal. How large is the sum? No small trifle would buy Leah from me!"

The sum was mentioned and the offer accepted. "What about the Worrell people?" Traynell suggested. "Mason's relatives might seek to make it hot for me. May I refer them to you?"

"Most certainly," the Governor replied. "Refer them to me, and I will make them see that simple act of justice in its true light."

The doctor left the house, and with a cold sweat

rolling from his temples he muttered to himself as he went along: "So she's going to marry the Governor, my beautiful Leah. He has proved one too many for me. With Max Stanhope and Dr. Bob I might have won out, but with three against me and one of them Joseph Fourfield, my case is hopeless. I throw up, this time; but you're not dead yet, my loved one, - and everything comes to him who waits. I'll get you under my thumb a second time, maybe, and if I do, I won't take kisses! Ah, no, I won't take kisses! I wonder if Russell knows that she intends to marry Fourfield. I've a notion to call on him and see. I'll do the humble with him, ha, ha, and get back my pistol! But if ever I get a chance, my esteemed confrere, I'll pay back that kicking you gave me with interest. I'll wait; it's the easiest thing in the world to do-when you can't help yourself."

Dr. Russell jumped up when Traynell was

ushered before him.

"Keep your seat, Russell," said the caller with brazen assurance. "To-morrow the papers will contain Mason Worrell's confession about that affair out West, and, as Leah Wentworth after this will be nothing to me or you—she's going to marry Governor Fourfield—I have dropped in to suggest that we let bygones be bygones and be friendly as we were once on a time. Here's my hand, will you take it and forgive the mad act of the man who loves Leah Wentworth; ay, loves her as dearly as you do?"

Dr. Bob took the offered hand, held it a moment then dropped it. "There's no use in keeping up the feud," he said, "neither of us will gain any credit by it, and here is your pistol. It is still loaded, and the greatest favor you could do me, Traynell, would be to discharge its contents into me and put an end to an existence that is torture to me without Leah."

Dr. Traynell took his pistol and balanced himself on the edge of an office chair. "So you knew she was going to marry the Governor," he hazarded, refusing to take dismissal from Dr. Bob's listless attitude.

"Yes," was the weary reply, "I knew it, and I

wish that I could forget it."

"Do you think she loves the Governor?"
"I cannot tell; Stanhope says she does not."

"Then why does she take him?"

"God only knows."

"You've got more money than he has and could give her as good a position in society, if not better. Perhaps she thought you too young for her; yet she'll still be young at eighty. Anyhow, don't be too blue about it, there are plenty of women."

"But none like Leah."

"No, none like Leah," Traynell re-echoed with a sigh. "Good-bye, I am glad we have patched up our difference and hope we will be friends in the future."

## XXII.

SHORTLY after the Governor's visit to Philadelphia Leah went with Max and Mabel to Columbus.

Max took a furnished house there and all hands were busy. Leah and Mabel with the selection and superintendence of the trousseau, Joseph and Max with the remodeling of some living rooms in the spacious home of the Governor and the new fitting up of a special suite for the use of the bride.

"Stanhope," the Governor had said, "come with me to select everything, you know what she fancies,-don't let me forget any single item."

And so, thanks to their combined efforts, it was not long ere all was in readiness, and Leah was

invited to inspect her future abode.

She found everything in perfect taste and exactly to her own taste. With one room she was more than pleased, it was the snuggery. Here were her favorite authors arranged in a bookcase: the musical instruments with which she and the Governor were familiar; the piano in the alcove, the others leaning about it in their cases, and the cabinet handy; the writing table completely furnished, from her favorite ink to the very latest fad she had adopted in stationery, and some of the Governor's legal cap and manuscript; a window garden in which also hung a bird cage; easy chairs, lounges, ottomans of every description, and in one corner a work table.

The rich effect of the mahogany furniture was much enhanced by a creamy yellow tint of wall; and the Oriental rug of yellow tones predominating, which covered the centre of the floor, also of mahogany, blended in pleasing harmony.

The window curtains and door hangings of yellow brocade looped back with cord and tassels, showed snowy lace hangings behind them, and the pictures were carefully chosen to match the tout ensemble of the room.

"Only one thing has been forgotten," Leah remarked quietly, after she had given full vent to her delight and admiration.

"And that is?" the Governor queried in a sur-

prised tone.

"Why, your long Dutch pipe," Leah answered genially. "It should find a place near the work table as Max's does near Mabel's. How came

you to forget that?"

"I don't know," said the Governor, looking straight into her eyes with the steady gaze of a simple, earnest nature, and deducing from her remark her secret desire that their home life should resemble that of the Stanhopes. "That defect will soon be remedied," he said with a smile. "Is there anything else, darling?"

"Not another thing," she asserted. "When the Dutch pipe is in its place the snuggery will be

perfect."

The Governor kissed her. "Ah," he sighed, "if

# 158 Leave Me My Honor.

to-morrow were only the wedding day! Think of it, five days more to the second of June! Now that everything is in order here, every hour seems an age until you are mine, sweetheart."

#### XXIII.

For that evening they were invited to a lawn fête. Leah was handsomely gowned in white, Mabel in pink, and they made a pretty picture together, the centre of a select crowd eagerly

striving to do them honor.

The Governor's eyes shone with pride whenever they rested on his bride-to-be-of whose popularity in that section he was now assured, and Stanhope's smile was a study as with a significant nod he drew Leah's attention to Mabel in the thick of a flirtation with young Hapnett, who had just arrived for his uncle's wedding. Max liked to see her flirt, for at no other time was she more brilliant; and as to the rest he trusted her implicitly.

He therefore devoted himself to the hostess, and was voted, in consequence, not only the handsomest man on the lawn but the most helpful; and when he announced his attention of spending another month in Columbus, the ladies who flocked about him were delighted and showed it.

Mabel saw it all with a corner of her eve, but her former jealousy had now given place to a sense of pride that her husband, her own handsome Max, should be so appreciated.

The second of June dawned beneath a sky full of fleecy clouds that disappeared when the white sun burned above.

The city was aglow with flags and bunting and floral arches, through which the bridal party would pass.

The wedding was solemnized at noon, while cannon were booming, bells ringing, whistles

screaming.

The officiating clergyman, an eminent divine, made the service very impressive, and a slight tremor ran through Leah's frame when she was called upon with much earnestness to love, honor and obey the man who stood by her side; for well she knew that she did not love him as a wife should love her husband. The thought of Ralph passed through her mind as the service proceeded: there were tears in her eyes; and it was with a sigh she left the altar with her new life partner. She had loved Ralph truly at the last: this man, she felt confident, would never take his place.

Nor did Russell fail to get his share of her recollection. What was he doing on her wedding day? And as she mused over her own question, a vision of the doctor's office floated before her eyes. There it was, as plain as the reality itself could be; the sun was shining on Dr. Bob's face as he sat at his table, and its rays were reflected on some object he held in his hand. Such utter despair was depicted on his countenance that she

shuddered. Slowly the object is raised to the kingly face and for a moment Leah was breathless, then she saw it lowered and laid gently on the table, and the next moment the doctor was on

his knees in praying attitude.

She was in a Pullman with her new husband. on their way to Newport when this happened, and she instantly turned to the Governor, and asked him to send a message to Dr. Bob requesting him to "come to Newport." Governor Fourfield smiled as he complied with her wish. "She is sorry for him," he said to himself, "and she wants her friend back again. I hope that he will come."

But Dr. Bob did not come: instead of doing so, he wired to the Governor the one word "Impossible" and mailed Leah a sheet of note paper bearing the single sentence: "Leave me my honor."

Again, as she read the words there came into her eves the look Ralph had seen in them on the day of Mabel's conversazione, with the only difference that its wistfulness and longing were now intensified.

"I wish Max and Mabel had come with us," she said to her husband on that day. "I wonder why they wouldn't come when I begged them so hard to do so. There are so many strange faces about me. Send for them; make them come, I want them!"

"You shall have them, my pet," he replied, speaking as to a spoiled child, "if I can fetch them."

"Oh, Joseph, they will not come; I know they won't! Tell me what would you say to our leaving this place with all its brilliance and fashion, and surprising them to-morrow in their quiet home. Shall we? There is no snuggery in this big hotel, and society for us just now has no charms."

"My lovely bride, do you wish it so much?"

"Oh, yes, Joseph, let us go to them. Mabel's eves will open wide when she sees me, and Max —Max will laugh at us, but I shall not mind how much he teases me so that I can see his dear, handsome old face whenever I want to."

So instead of spending the season at Newport, the Governor and his bride spent three days there

and then returned home quietly.

Max was reading to Mabel a descriptive paragraph from the Newport society column in which Governor Fourfield and his fair bride prominently figured, when Leah rushed in with the Governor behind her.

To say that Max and Mabel were surprised would be putting it mildly, but their welcome

was none the less loving.

"She 'wanted Mabel and Max;" here the Governor imitated Leah's tearful accents to perfection, "and as Mahomet in the shape of Mr. and Mrs. Stanhope would not come to the mountain, I brought Leah, the mountain, to Mahomet."

"I couldn't stand it away from you any longer," Leah whimpered, "and he," a smile breaking through her grief, "was just as anxious to leave Newport as I was. I had but to mention the fact of there being no snuggery in the big hotel, and he was ready to leave."

Max laughed heartily. "You are nothing but a big baby, Leah," he said, "and what will they say about you at Newport, sneaking off in that

fashion at the dead hour of the night!"

"Let them say what they please, Max," Leah answered. "I've got you, you dear, handsome old thing, and my sweet, sweet Mabel, and I'm satisfied.'

"And haven't you got the Governor?" Mabel

asked, a little censure in her voice.

"Of course I have," Leah said proudly, "and isn't he just too sweetly indulgent for anything! Come here, Joey, and you may give me just one. What do you think, Max, they're speaking of him in connection with the presidential nomination; I heard them yesterday. Meanwhile you two pack up your things and come home with us, there to stay as long as I want you."

"No such thing, Leah," Max said firmly. "We will spend as much time as possible with you, but we shall stay in this house until the end of the month and then go back to Philadelphia."

"What's the matter with you," he found an opportunity for whispering to her later, "that you couldn't get up a flirtation at Newport with some millionaire or other and so make the time pass rapidly? I'm ashamed of you and sorry for the Governor."

"I couldn't help it, Max," she returned with a break in her voice, "I was so homesick, I had to see a face I had known in Philadelphia, and I wish—I wish I could go to Ralph's grave and weep out my heart to him."

"Leah, Leah, my poor girl, don't let your husband see you in tears. He loves you so devotedly, it would break his heart to see you unhappy.

Take up your life bravely. It is too late now to alter things."

To Mabel he said that night when they were alone, "Leah regrets her marriage to Fourfield;

she is very unhappy."

"I know it," she answered sadly, "and we must try to make her forget that she is not in Philadelphia by filling her life with interest and pleasure, so full, that she will not have time to think of her old home."

"Do you not see deeper than that into Leah

Fourfield's heart?"

Mabel sighed. "She made the Governor wire Dr. Bob to come to Newport from a station on the route," she said, apprehensively, "and he sent her a letter sheet on which he had written: 'Leave me my honor,' and to the Governor he wired,

'Impossible.'"

"She has sold her birthright for a mess of pottage," Max answered sententiously, "that's what Leah, the obstinate, has done; and now let her make the best of it. Ralph knew what he was doing when he gave her to Dr. Bob; there's a real man for you; I admire his principles. He might so easily have gone and made a whole lot of trouble for Fourfield, but he did not, and I honor him for it."

"What will she do when we go back without her?" Mabel wondered; "she cannot come with us."

"No, she cannot," said Max, decidedly, "but she will make a brave effort to do so. Do not encourage her to come, Mabel, even on a short visit; there will be trouble if you do. Here we are just over our peck of troubles and now Leah

must start afresh!"

"Poor Leah, I can't bear to see her look so sad. Her lips to-day had a grieved expression. I love her and would do anything to make her happy, and I admire and love the Governor."

"Also the Governor's nephew."

"Nonsense; but are you jealous of him?"

"Desperately jealous, and you have proved to me that your promises are like pie crust, made to be broken. Not that I ever asked you to do anything, you took it on yourself to say it."

Say what?"

"'Dear Max, now that I have your love, I promise never to flirt with another man, let the opportunity be ever so tempting;' but I'm glad, my dear, that you do flirt again.

"Really?"

"You'd be dead in a week, if you didn't; and besides—

"Well?"

"You give me a rest."

"Oh, Max!"

Leah was restless, and presently a ceaseless round of gayety was inaugurated, of which she was the head and centre, and which lasted until it was time for Max and Mabel to go home, when, finding that she could not accompany them to Philadelphia, she stayed at home, denied herself to all her new acquaintances who were still in the city, and moped.

Her husband did not know what to make of it. He thought she was ill and called in a physician,

# 166 Leave Me My Honor.

and the latter advised him to take her to the coun-

try.

The Governor owned a handsome country seat, and there, in close communion with nature, Leah found peace.

#### XXIV.

ONE night when the moonlight lay white over the fair earth, rivaling the brightness of day, they sat together in the garden under a cluster of old oaks casting fantastic shadows.

In loving ecstasy the Governor watched Leah as she drew over her shoulders a cloak of lace and chiffon, the moon's rays falling upon her lovely

face and shining hair.

How much had happened since first he met her. One by one the honors he had gained passed through his mind. He held every fair gift of the world in his hands and Leah was his wife. There was a smile on his face and Leah heard a snatch of some gay love song.

"What are you thinking of?" she asked him. "Looking at you so beautiful and good, I wondered how I had been so fortunate as to win you," he replied. "Gratitude to God, who has so superabundantly blessed me, and made my heart so

light, overwhelms me."

He gathered her to him and kissed the beautiful face he had dreamed would rest upon his breast.

And she, Leah Fourfield, had found out for herself one secret, and it was, that with all her heart she now loved the ardent young wooer who had been so sure of winning her. Yes, she loved

him. She owned it to herself that the whole happiness of her life was gone with Dr. Bob. Money, position, nothing was any good, nothing save love; and love and she had parted on the day when she had sent Robert Russell, mad with anguish, from her.

She repented her marriage to the Governor. She could not understand what had possessed her to marry him. How differently she would now act if all had to be done over again. Dr. Bob had passed out of her life and his pride would never let him come back again—never; whereas, now that fate had parted them, she, on the contrary, longed once more to be in his presence.

When she had read the line he penned her, the old glamor fell upon her, the old love stirred in her heart. She wanted to know what he had done

since they parted.

There were times when she felt ready to reveal what was in her heart to her husband; and again there were others when she shuddered lest any accident should disclose it to him.

How the words on the sheet of note paper stung her. In fancy she could see his proud face bending over them, and heard him repeat to himself the phrase that cut her off and cast her from him

-"Leave me my honor."

Through long nights she lay almost crazed with her misery, and yet, at times, athwart this misery came fitful gleams of dazzling light which served but to make the darkness that followed more intense.

"Would the time come," she wondered, "when he would forget her, when her face would fade from his memory and cease to torture him?—Did

he now remember her with contempt?"

She fought a brave fight with grim Despair. One moment it would look as though victory was hers; she would say to herself that love is play: she would go about smiling and singing such snatches of song as her husband had sung in the moonlight, and the next moment she would break down with bitter cries and bitter tears.

She spent hours watching the fair face of nature; and among the green leaves, in the gleaming water, in the hearts of the flowers she saw his face. She lingered over books and from their

pages Dr. Bob smiled up at her.

She must not give way to this. She must fight against it, sweet as it was, aye, though it killed her, she would tear from her heart the image impressed there. She looked up to her husband with a smile. "You are happy with me here at Rose Terrace?" she said.

"These hours at Rose Terrace," he answered, "will never be forgotten by me. Nothing will ever be like them to me again. I may live in stately mansions, I may meet fair ladies, but no place will ever be like Rose Terrace to me, and no one-no one like you. You, who are so beautiful that all men love you, are here with me, my bride."

Certainly fate was good to him.

She met him always with a smile, parted from him with a kiss. It seemed to him as though an eternity of bliss were unrolled before him. With the glowing warmth of the love in his heart, he noted not how cool was her smile, how languid her caress. Away from her all was blank, dull and desolate. In the sunlight of her presence all

was bright and fair.

How he attended to the duties of his office was a mystery to him. He found himself compelled to rise early in the morning to get through most of it before he saw her. If he caught a glimpse of her, if he heard the sound of her voice, his pulses thrilled, and away flew all interest in letter, des-

patch, document or manuscript.

Every morning, knowing her fondness for flowers, he would come to this garden that he might get the loveliest and most fragrant for her, and a bouquet would be laid at her plate. first she had lovingly petted the flowers and raised them to her face, but one day he noticed that she did not do so, and concluding that he had been unfortunate in his choice on this occasion he inquired what her favorite flower was.

"The Oriental hyacinth first," she replied, "the

rose comes next. I love them both."

The next morning the bouquet waiting for her was composed of Oriental hyacinths, the finest she had ever seen. She looked from the flowers to the face that was watching her, and a flush of shame reddened her cheek, shame that she should take all from him and give him nothing in return. Her eyes dropped from his and something tender came into them, and henceforth she was kinder to him.

She talked to him more frequently and their conversations were never dull. He had lived in the political world, of which she knew something and wanted to know more, and she was interested in every detail he gave her. She hardly realized, herself, how much time she spent in his company, and would have looked up in surprise had her attention been drawn thereto.

One morning she rose earlier than usual and going out on the terrace for a breath of the sweet air, she saw him sitting at the farther end where the moss roses grew. His face was turned meditatively toward the river.

"He has a poet's soul as well as the keen intelligence of a politician," she thought, as she gazed at him. "If he lives, Ralph said once, the day will come when the world will do homage to him and

he will be one of the first men in it."

She walked over to him, and laying her hand affectionately on his shoulder, asked him to go with her for a ramble; and away they strolled like two lovers, with the azured sky above them and the song of the birds in their ears. In a sunny nook overgrown with wild flowers they suddenly came upon a poor woman who was sitting there holding a baby in her arms.

They paused. A light such as Fourfield had never seen there before spread over his wife's

countenance.

She leaned over the wretched woman and spoke to her as he had not imagined she could speak.

A feeble wail came from the child. "Is your

baby ill?" Leah said gently.

"It is dying," was the reply, and the Governor's heart was touched by the woebegone appearance

of the speaker.

Then the white hands of his wife put aside the old shawl and felt with kindly pity the dying baby's face. "It is dying, you said?" she asked.

"Yes, lady, dying of want," the mother repeated, with a dreadful clawing of her hand. "Starved!"

Leah took up the child. "You seem hardly able

to hold the poor little thing," she suggested.

"I am dying of hunger myself," answered the woman fiercely, "but she is all I have. My husband is dead. Give her back to me, please, and leave us to die."

"You shall not die if care can keep you alive," replied Leah, and the Governor saw tears fall

from her eyes upon the little dying face.

"You must have food and sleep," she continued; "afterward we will see what can be done."

The woman stared at her, and began to weep bitterly. The Governor thought he had never seen so lovely a picture as his beautiful wife in her dainty gown bending like an angel over the starving mother and child.

"Joseph," she said, "help me to take them to

Rose Terrace, and send for Dr. Jerrold."

Joseph half led, half carried the woman, and

Leah followed with the child.

When the poor creature had been seated in a low rocker, Leah laid the infant in her arms. "Hope for the best," she said, "good care may restore your baby. Here, drink this milk," she added, offering her a glass which the Governor had brought her, "and dry your tears, the doctor will soon be with us."

Even as she spoke Dr. Jerrold came up the terrace and took the milk from the woman, for she

was unable to swallow it.

One glance at the baby and he shook his head;

then, after carefully examining the mother: "Too late," he whispered to the Governor; "let her have milk, but only enough to moisten her lips and occasionally a drop of wine;" and he had scarcely given these instructions when the baby breathed its last. He took it from the arms of its mother, laid it gently on a garden seat, and pressed down its eyelids, Leah looking on with tears in her eyes. "The mother will survive it but a few hours," he said to her; "do not attempt to move her into the house. Let her die out here in the sunlight. I will come again in an hour."

When he returned, the poor creature's woes were over; and ere long she was laid to rest with her child, not in a pauper's grave but in a

corner of the Governor's own ground.

In September they went back to the city, and in a short time Leah's princely hospitality and lavish patronage of sports had won her a reputation equaled only by that of her personal loveliness and the exquisite taste of her toilette.

## XXV.

"Max," said Mabel, one day in January, "I am going to tell you a secret."

"Fire away," said Max, laconically.

"Dr. Bob told me to tell you."

"He did, eh? What had he to do with it?"

"Oh, he made sure that it was a fact, that is all."

"A fact? What fact? What are you talking

about anyway?"

"I am trying to tell you, Max, that at last—at last our union is being blessed and I'm so happy."

Max jumped from his chair. "What!" he ex-

claimed.

"Yes," said Mabel, "he is sure of it and told me to tell you—and won't we be happy, Max, with a dear little daughter."

"Daughter? Did the doctor say that, too?"

"No, it was the fortune-teller that Leah and I went to consult before Ralph died. She told me

I was to have a daughter."

"Well, I'll be switched! After all these years!—Come here, let me kiss you," and he showed her how happy she had made him. "Did the fortune-teller tell Leah anything like that?" he continued.

"I think not," Mabel answered, "but she told

her that she would be wed three times before she

was forty."

"That's where she fooled herself," said Max with conviction. "Fourfield hasn't got heart disease, and Leah, great flirt though she is, does not believe in divorces. But, Mabel, little woman, now I must take great care of you; no more dancing and late hours this winter. You agree with me, don't you? You will be careful, for my sake?"

"Yes, Max, and for mine-and the little girl's."

Seven months had passed since Leah had married Governor Fourfield.

They were together one morning in their pretty breakfast room when the mail was brought in.

The Governor waded through a mass of correspondence. "A letter from Stanhope," he said when he came to it. He opened it and two minutes afterward burst into a loud laugh and laid the letter before Leah. "Read that news," he said, pointing out a paragraph, "and tell me what you think of it."

"The Stork-Dr. Bob sure-not to travel," she read audibly while going over the rest for herself.

"Oh, Joseph," she said, "how happy Mabel will be! The fortune-teller prophesied that a daughter would come to her; a dear little doll of a girl I am sure she will be. Why, she'll just go crazy over her and so will I. That she is not to travel means that she will not visit us this winter; but we, Joseph, must go and see the little girl when she comes. Let's see," she added, counting on her fingers, "it will be June; and this year instead

of going to Newport or Rose Terrace, we'll go to Philadelphia and from there, if Mabel is strong enough, to Atlantic City. You'll not be able to tear me away from that little girl in a hurry when once I have her in my arms. And," she murmured to herself, "why couldn't a little girl come to me also?"

The letter she received by the next post from Mabel confirmed the news and gave fuller particulars. She and Max were so happy about it. He was as careful over her "as an old hen over a

young pullet," as she put it.

"I shall begin at once with her wardrobe," she wrote, "hand embroidered everything must be, you know; and as Max will not allow me to go out much, I shall do all the Henriettas myself. You must come here in June, Leah, I couldn't possibly do without you then. To think-to think of having a little daughter at last, and when she grows up won't I be proud of her? And maybe, sometimes, I will lend her to you. I wonder whom she will resemble? Max, I hope; he is as handsome as ever, Leah, and getting fat."

Leah, too, as the months went by, embroidered pretty things for the expected little lady, and during the hours she spent alone over the pleasant task, what more natural than that her thoughts should frequently wander to Philadelphia, to the Stanhopes, and to Dr. Russell, even if the Quaker City had not been suggested to her mind by an occasional visitor whose acquaintance she had first made there, young Hapnett, her nephew by

marriage.

The Governor was proud of his nephew and

pleased at the close friendship that had grown between Leah and him. Often at twilight he would come in quietly to the snuggery when the two were trying over a new tune, or a new step in dancing, or talking over a new book or play, and they would not be aware of his presence until he would make it known by a "bravo" or the clapping of his hands in applause.

One evening Leah seated herself on a low stool before the garden window; her knees were encircled in her arms and her head leaned against the cushioned sides of an armchair. She was alone with young Hapnett, and thanks to the storm that raged outside, it had been easy for the Governor to make his usual entrance into the cozy apartment, unnoticed by either of its occupants.

A shadowy smile flitted about his lips as he noted her attitude, and he wondered what had caused that nervous quivering of her underlip which a gleam of the dying twilight revealed to him, and which in her was ever a mark of inward agitation. Presently he heard in the semi-darkness:—

"You saw them out driving together, you say, Willie?"

"Yes, at the Green street entrance of Fairmount Park."

"Did he look happy?"

"How could he help it with that girl beside him?"

"Is she very beautiful?"

"Very."

"Prettier than Mabel Stanhope?"

"Well—no, not to say prettier exactly; a different style altogether."

"Something on my order?"

"Not at all."

"Describe her to me."

"Well—she's tall for one thing, and swings herself rhythmically.—she has an admirable walk, the men stand in line on Chestnut street to see her go by—small feet, high-arched and springy; white hands, but the fingers are a trifle too thick, and the nails a little too broad."

"You must have examined her hands very

closely."

"I have. I spent quite a few evenings with her during my stay in Philadelphia."

"Go on with the description."
"Why—where did I leave off?"

"With her hands."

"Oh, yes. Her arms are pretty and plump; they felt like velvet against my cheek—"

"Go on, don't stop."

"And her neck when she is in full dress would charm the heart of a—of anything, don't you know."

"What about her face?"

"Her face is all that it should be, oval in contour, with brown velvet eyes, red ruby lips, cheeks like the rose—which go into dimples when she gives you her heavenly smile. Her chin is very pretty and she holds it at the proper angle, and her eyelashes are long and thick. I noticed them particularly when her head was on my—oh, I am intimate with her brother, you know, the botanist, who——"

"What on earth has her brother, the botanist, to do with her dimples and ruby lips; do proceed, Willie; how about her hair?"

"Oh, that's brown with red streaks through it,

and ever so curly."

"She is a handsomer woman than I am, then?"

"What are you talking about!"

"Isn't she?"

"No more to be compared to you than—than chalk to cheese; but she's very pretty and I've taken quite a fancy to her. Now, if only that rascally Dr. Bob doesn't cut me out."

"Do you think he loves her?"

"Who, Dr. Bob? How could he help it! She's the kind of a girl that winds herself right about you, and you feel in a moment that you haven't lived before you saw her, and that you 'can't do without her, nohow,' see?"

"You didn't feel that way about Mabel, I sup-

pose?"

"No, I did not. With her it was a case of do and dare; go through fire and water to serve her; fight for her to win her. I didn't see her this trip; she keeps herself at home since she was married over again to the same man she had before. She was a fool, I think."

"In what way?"

"Oh, in getting married so soon again and to the same old chestnut she had before. She might have had a grand career as a grass widow; and what on earth did she get a divorce for if she wanted to go right back to the same fellow again? That was a funny scheme!—Yes, I think Dr. Bob loves her. He was mighty careful over her at

any rate; tucked the lap robe round her, pulled her collar up behind, and the rest of it; and she sat there beside him, nodding right and left to the people she knew-mostly fellows-and smiling at him. He's a good looking man, that doctor is; wish I were half as handsome."

"You are a pretty boy, Willie."

"Glad you think so,—that's just it, I'm a boy, he is a man. She is older than I am, you know."

"Is she older than I am?"

"How old are you?" "Nearly thirty-seven."

"Get out! Why, you look to be twenty. That's what she is and I'm three months younger,—and, by the way she looked at him and smiled"here came a deep sigh—"I believe it is a go with her, and they will be married."

Leah drew a long breath, but there was more

bitterness in her sigh than in Willie's.

"Oh, well," he said resignedly, after a short pause, "I suppose I will have to forget her as I have done so many girls who married other fellows. Get up and let's try that new waltz together, the one that is danced backward and forward like a pendulum. You're a daisy to waltz with, Aunt Leah."

She got up and went once around the room with him in the dark; then somebody separated them and she was whirled about in the arms of her husband in the London way of waltzing, always to the right, never reversing, until Leah grew dizzy, and Willie meanwhile touched a button and there was light. "How long have you been here, Uncle Joseph?" he asked.

"Ever since Dr. Russell went driving with your girl by the Green street entrance to Fairmount Park," he answered, smiling. "That very same doctor wanted my wife badly, but I showed him what I could do with the boxing gloves. He gave her up to me quietly."

"What do you mean, Joseph?" Leah asked

breathlessly.

"Only that I had to prove to the doctor beyond a doubt that I was a better man than he before he would let me have you. Ralph had given you to him, he kept repeating, and no man should take you from him. I did, however, and you're mine to have and to hold till death do us part."

## XXVI.

No rest did Leah find on her pillow that night,

and no sleep either until break of day.

Not even the hush that followed the storm outside, or the peaceful calm of her bedchamber, could at first coax "Nature's sweet restorer" to her couch.

And when at length she did slumber at daylight she dreamed that she had gone to Rose Terrace with the girl with the brown velvet eyes and the heavenly smile, had made her lie down on the same garden seat where had lain the little dead baby, and that she had beaten her across the face with a cane as she had done Mason Worrell; that her husband looked on with a malicious smile an kept Dr. Bob from interfering by threatening him with his right fist encased in a boxing glove.

No words could tell Leah's heartache and misery. She used every effort to conceal it and maintain her dignity, but the bow that is never unstrung cannot stand the tension forever, and now and again a wild longing would possess her to take wings and fly away, anywhere, away from the

social whirl and its hollow joys.

And the days passed on, each a little longer, a little colder than its predecessor.

No sweet temper either did the Governor's lady display whenever she succumbed to her incessant strain; yet not an unkind word fell from her husband's lips. She was ill and he must be patient with her, although he felt, in truth, not a little puzzled over her alternate fits of peevish-

ness and apparent remorse.

Something was wrong; what, he could not tell; yet, in spite of all, when the noon sun looked in upon her troubled, feverish morning sleep, it always lighted up the form of the Governor sitting beside her bed, waiting her awakening. And her conscience smote her when she opened her eyes and found him there, and she would be to him all that was loving and kind. Then again she would grow impatient of the "still, small voice" within her breast, and she wished could die. There would be only one to mourn for her anyway, she said to herself, the Governor. Yet the thought that such a fate might be in store for him was a dagger in her heart.

They would take her away as they had taken Ralph, and he would wander all day about this big house alone and at night sit in the snuggery without her. And he would suffer the pangs she went through after Ralph's death. Poor Ralph! She had been the one only woman for him as she was for the Governor. His had been the ideal love, but not the kind of love for which she had been overly grateful. His devotion made her too sure; only at the last, when she had feared to lose it, had she appreciated its worth. Since she had lost Ralph she had thought her heart was dead and peace her portion; but now, it lived

again, and its life was only hopeless torture, misery, pain. Banished forever was the resignation she had attained, the poor mite of content which she believed was happiness. She had thrown

away all that made life worth anything.

An intolerable sense of fatigue pervaded her entire being one afternoon as she sat with her husband. Even the passion which had so tormented her had lost its sting. Rain had fallen in the earlier day and the sunshine sparkled in the drops of moisture on every roof and tree. Instinctively she turned to her husband; she felt glad that she was safe with him, not dead as she had longed to be.

Tears rushed into the eyes of the weary man before her. He lifted up her head and pressed it closely to him, and kissed her on her forehead.

She lay still and marveled at the terror and

anguish in his sympathetic eyes.

And it was she was the cause of it all! But no. never more! Never again must her patient Joe suffer such pain through her hateful waywardness; she would stifle it within her breast, and learn to love him as she had learned to love Ralph.—But who was that in the room behind her: she knew that step; could it be, was it really Dr. Bob?

It was, and the next moment he stood before her with a glass in his hand. "You are to drink this," he said, "and go to sleep. I have been here with you for three weeks, and you have never once said 'how do you do' to me."

"Have I been ill?" she asked.

"Very ill," he replied, "of a nasty fever; and if

you're obedient and go to sleep directly, you will get well. If, on the contrary, you worry over the matter that has been troubling you, I must take you back to Philadelphia with me, to Mount Moriah, and leave you there."

"Lay me down on the bed," she said, addressing her husband, "and don't leave me. I will sleep if

you hold my hand."

For five hours she slept, and neither her hus-

band nor the doctor left her bedside.

"If she is in her right mind when she comes out of this sleep," the physician whispered, "she is saved. If not, we must prepare for the worst. I have done all that man can do; the rest is with God."

There they sat hour after hour, those two men who loved Leah so fondly, watching the marble face on the pillow, which to the husband seemed gray and drawn, but to the doctor shortly began to give hopeful indications.

One thin blue-veined hand was lying on the coverlid, the other was clasped in that of the Governor's, as it had been ever since he laid her

down.

At the end of the fifth hour, the eyelids fluttered, then opened, to meet the eyes of Dr. Bob full of intense scrutiny. "Do you know me?" he asked.

"Yes," Leah answered, "is Ralph better?"

"Ralph is perfectly well and you must go to sleep again.'

"He will not die, then?"

"Not this time," said the doctor, and held his

hand over her eyes, compelling them to close

again.

The two watchers exchanged looks and continued their vigil for another long hour. Suddenly Dr. Russell stepped out of sight and motioned the Governor to bend over his wife.

Her eves slowly reopened and she saw the face of her husband. "Joseph," she said, "is it still

raining?"

"No, my darling," he replied, "it will be a clear night."

"Morning, you mean."

"Morning, then."

"Don't let me oversleep myself. I want to see Willie off."

"Are you still very sleepy?"

"Yes, and so tired; but why are you sitting up so late? Are you ill or anything? You look so white and worried."

"You have been ill, Leah."

"T ?"

"Yes, for nearly five weeks."

"Is Dr. Bob here, or did I dream it?"

"He is here to answer for himself," said the doctor, returning to the bedside, "and has been for three weeks pouring medicine into your lips night and day, and now if you will take a few spoonfuls of broth from the nurse, I will leave you, to take a little rest, and the Governor shall come with me. We need it."

What a glorious light came into the Governor's eyes as he heard the doctor's last words. was safe, else he would never have left her and

ordered nim away.

He kissed the little hand he still clasped, and left the room, with the doctor, after the nurse had given Leah the broth and she had taken it with apparent relish.

In his own room the Governor threw himself on his knees and thanked God for the life of Leah, after which he laid himself down and slept for

eight hours.

Not so with Dr. Bob. He flung himself across the bed in a guest chamber and spent a couple of hours in painful unrest, until the nurse reported to him the patient was sleeping soundly, healthily. He crept into the sick room to make sure of the fact, returned, looked up to God, undressed and went to bed. His mind was at last easy: Leah would get well. He slept.

## XXVII.

In the next few days, in answer to her questions, the Governor explained to his dear convalescent how, on the morning after the great storm, when he had gone in to kiss her good-bye before he went out—as he usually did whenever she failed to make her appearance at the breakfast table—he had found her sitting up in bed and muttering about the girl with the brown velvet eyes Willie had been speaking about, and of Mason Worrell in connection with her, and of Rose Terrace and the little dead baby. This, to him, unintelligible jumble, had been followed by some wild threats and the mention of Dr. Bob and boxing gloves. "After that," he said, "you quieted down somewhat, then began to moan and cry about the pain in your heart, and when that was over, you put on airs. Your pride and dignity must be maintained at any cost, you kept repeating until the sharp pains racked you and you screamed in agony. The 'east winds and their moisture' seemed to distress you terribly at this time, though the temperature of your room was at summer heat.

"Days passed and I was at my wits' end to know what to do; for you were getting worse instead of better all the time, although I had the best doctors in the city holding consultations over you, and our old family physician spent nearly all of his time beside you. At last, one day he said to me, 'There is a specialist in Philadelphia who is fast becoming world-known for the success he has in the treatment of fevers. You must send for him.' 'Who is he?' I inquired. 'Dr. Robert Russell,' he replied. My heart leaped, Leah. Surely here was the man who would cure you! I sent for him and he came. When he entered your room, you happened to have just gone through a sullen fit of temper, and were begging me to forgive your peevishness; and oh, Leah, how flushed was your face and how wild your eves!

"'Lay her down,' said Dr. Bob, when he had examined your pulse and felt your forehead; and as I followed his order you poured forth a veritable deluge of verbiage about a passion for which you hated yourself and which was stronger than you and was making you so unhappy. You raved a good bit about that passion for the next ten days, though you never told us what it was, but on the eleventh day after the doctor's arrival you came to your right mind again. For a little while you seemed to know that I was sitting beside your bed watching you, and you were so

sweet and affectionate!

"But presently you grew worse again and many times you cut my heart with the words, 'I want to die!' Then your life with Ralph and your grief for his loss became the subject of your ramblings. Then came the passion again that tormented you so, and this, oh, God be praised, was followed by a lull in your delirium and you were glad that you were not dead, not out there where the tempest could beat on your grave, as you said, but

here in my arms, safe with me.

"Then we lifted you out of bed, and placed you in the chair by the window, and when you first recognized Dr. Russell, you thought you were in your old home and he was in attendance on Ralph. And now, my darling, you are on the road to recovery and will soon be my own bright Leah again. The doctor will be with us another week; and then if you have had no relapse in the meantime, he will leave us. I owe him your life, Leah, how can I repay him?"

"By never mentioning the matter again," said Dr. Bob, who had stepped into the sick room in time to hear the last sentence. "I promised you once that I would be your friend and hers. And now, Mrs. Fourfield, if you are not too tired and care to hear it, I will read you a budget of Phila-

delphia news I have just received."

"Oh, no, doctor, I am not too tired. Let us have all the news from home-from Philadel-

phia."

The Governor looked grieved, but patted her hand gently, as he said to his guest, "Somehow she has never learned to look on this as her home;

why, I cannot say."

"Home is where the heart is," thought Dr. Bob, but he did not say so, and chided himself the next moment for harboring the sentiment. He opened a letter and began to read from it:

"'My wife and I,' this is from Max, as you may guess, 'are rejoiced to hear of Leah's progress toward recovery, and I am having a serious time with her, she longs so to be with her friend, and I candidly believe that if I didn't keep constant watch and guard over her, she would be off by the first train she could catch."

"My poor Mabel," Leah sighed, "yes, I know that she longs for me as I long for her. Nothing shall keep me away from her in June, Joseph, do

you hear me?"

"Yes, I hear you, my darling, and you shall go to Philadelphia in June. Won't you proceed, doctor?"

"'Dr. Traynell has been here several times to get more accurate news of Leah's condition than the papers give, and when she was so very low, he cried like a baby about her. He seems a changed man, somehow, gentler, more humble.'— He does seem changed. Came to me not long after you and I had the boxing bout, apologized and asked for my friendship. It sometimes does a fellow like him a heap of good to get a good kicking. Yet I do not altogether trust him: if the opportunity for mischief comes his way, he'll take it, of that I am certain."

"You may be doing him an injustice," Leah gently remonstrated, "perhaps he is truly repentant. I received a letter from him while at Rose Terrace in which he begged my forgiveness and asked for a reconciliation. Joseph advised me to answer it kindly, which I did; but I can never forget that hour with him in Mabel's parlor. For many nights after that I dreamed of snakes, and they were always coiled about my limbs and body, pressing oh, so heavily on my chest, licking my

lips with their forked tongues. Is there anything

more in your letter?"

"'Young Hapnett is here again with his aunt Sophie and may frequently be seen at social gatherings with Miss Dora Gracie, the lady with whom you were reported to be engaged." Here the doctor threw back his head and laughed. "Engaged to Dora Gracie, indeed!" he ejaculated. "Oh, no, she is not my style of a woman at all."

"But she went driving with you. Willie Hapnett told us about it the night before my wife was

taken sick," said the Governor.

"And now he spends much of his time with Dora," said the doctor, smiling. "Miss Gracie is a very nice young lady, of good parentage and Hapnett might do worse than good looking. marry her."

"But you would not marry her?" quizzed the

"Certainly not," the doctor returned, "she wouldn't suit me. As I told you, she is not my style of a woman at all."

Leah made rapid strides toward convalescence and was able to sit up a few hours in the snug-

gery after she had been carried there.

How glad she was to get back to the pretty room once more. There were geraniums and lilies blooming in the window garden. The hyacinth bulbs were sprouting and a Chinese vine was climbing over all. The canary, asleep on his perch, looked bushy and fat, her favorite Angora was purring on the softest cushion, and Don, her greyhound, stood ready to welcome her, and barked for joy when she touched his nose with her hand.

The next morning when the doctor came to bid her good-bye, she was quite bright, and he felt confident there was no longer danger of a relapse; nevertheless, he cautioned her to be careful.

Leah held his hand for a long time in hers at parting, and tears which she could not restrain fell upon it. She released it at last with a heartfelt "God bless you," and he departed with the Governor.

What these weeks had been to him God and his own heart knew.

bolt.

## XXVIII.

Max had been very busy of late. He had once told Ralph that he would gladly give onehalf of what he owned to the poor if he could be Mabel's chosen lover for one day and night; he was as good as his word, and even now, within but a few months of the realization of his wish, he was sparing no expense in the erection of a free hospital for poor children.

As to Mabel, she was in good health and spirits, and longing for the time to come when she could once more clasp Leah in her arms, and perhaps, if all went well, show her the little daughter; when, suddenly, one bright afternoon in the first week of June, a piece of news reached Max which fairly stunned him with the force of a thunder-

Governor Fourfield had been killed-an explosion had taken place at the Powder Works two miles north of the city at 10.30 A. M. of that day, killing the Governor and five of his friends who had gone there with him to visit the works, as well as three laborers.

The bodies of the victims were badly mutilated, beyond recognition almost; and the Governor, who had left Leah alive and well that morning, chatting gaily with his friends on their way to the station, had been brought home to her a mangled

corpse.

Max ran off to Dr. Russell's and found him studying in his office, little dreaming of the shocking news which was even then on its way to him in the shape of a telegram, and was handed to him a few minutes after Max's arrival.

He was appalled when Max blurted out in gasps: "Governor Fourfield is dead—killed by an explosion at the powder works—Mabel, how shall I tell Mabel?—and Leah! Who will go to Leah?"

"I will," said the doctor instantly. "Your place is right here with your wife,—and keep the news from her as long as you possibly can; I fear it will have a bad effect upon her. I felt so desirous to be with her when the time comes. But she is in God's hands, and if I am not back in time, call in Dr. Traynell; it will be safe to trust him with the case. Why, here he is now." The door had opened and Dr. Traynell walked in.

"What are you two looking so solemn about?"

he inquired, seeing their disturbed faces.

"Governor Fourfield is dead," said Dr. Bob sadly.

Dr. Traynell gasped for breath. "Where?

When?"

"He was killed at some powder works two miles from his residence," answered Max, "killed instantly and mutilated so as to be hardly recognizable; and Dr. Bob is preparing to start for Columbus at once."

And sure enough the doctor was even then busily packing a valise while giving orders to

his assistant to be carried out during his absence. "And now," he concluded, turning to Dr. Traynell, "you have dropped in most opportunely; you will drive me to the depot, won't you, so that I may board the next train West? I have not a moment to lose. Good-bye, Stanhope. will return in time if possible, and do you keep the news from your wife as long as ever you can."

Dr. Travnell had already taken up the valise and was hurrying off to his carriage with it.

They drove at full speed, reached the depot just in time to catch the express, and Dr. Russell

was off on his sad errand.

Dr. Traynell had now time to digest the news he had heard, as he slowly returned to his residence. Fourfield dead; Leah again a widow; and Dr. Bob hurrying to her. Would she turn to him now? Would she come back to Philadelphia to live, or would she stay in the western city? She would come back here, he felt sure: and he. Dr. Travnell, would make one more effort to win her, if not by fair means, then by foul. hugged himself to think that he had written her that humble letter which had brought from her a kind reply, and that he had pocketed his pride and become reconciled with Dr. Bob and Max Stanhope, her friends. He would visit the Stanhopes often, ingratiate himself still deeper in their confidence, and, if luck went with him, would bring their offspring into the world. There he would get daily news of Leah, or, better still, meet her, perhaps.

He walked from room to room of his oldfashioned house and fancied himself there with Leah, Leah the beautiful, whom neither time nor absence could drive from his heart. He felt no sorrow for the dreadful blow that had befallen her; she was free again; what cared he if it was Death that had severed the bonds?

Leah was still so dazed by her sudden bereavement that she showed no surprise at the arrival of Dr. Russell and at once unburdened herself of her sorrow to him: "He left me," she said, "with kind words on his lips, and now he lies there in that casket and they will not even let me kiss him once more. They say I must not see him, but I will see him, I must see him just once more; help me, doctor, won't you help me! He appeared to me last night in my dream, with Ralph, and he kissed me and wept over me. 'I am here, Leah,' he said, 'take your last look of me, but do not, do not look on me dead!' But I must look, I must see my dear one once more; oh, just once more, to kiss him and ask him to forgive me. He loved me, oh, how he loved me! Better than Ralph, even; and I did not try half hard enough to love him. We were so happy this spring; wherever we went or whatever we did. we were always together; our minds seemed to think in unison, we were so wrapped up in each other; and now he is there dead, and never again will I see the face that brightened at my coming, the dear eyes that held nothing but kindness and love. I must see him, Dr. Bob, just once more kiss his lips and hold his hand!"

## XXIX.

LEAH would not go with Dr. Bob when he went back to Philadelphia on Sunday after the funeral.

His first call, on arriving, was at the Stanhope mansion; and there he found that Mabel knew nothing yet of Leah's great trial; on the contrary, she was expecting every day to see her, and

wondered at her long delay.

She complained to him of her inability to sleep the night before, "and I had such a strange dream toward morning, when I did drop off for a few minutes," she said. "It was about Ralph. him coming toward me holding in his hand the picture of a large old-fashioned house in front of which all I could see was a marble building with large pillars; he pointed to a space between two windows on the wall of this house and sighed oh, so heavily, three times, 'Leah, Leah, Leah,' and his face was so full of grief! Could Leah be in any trouble, doctor, think you?"

The doctor had not sufficient courage to answer, but turned his back to her, so as to conceal his emotion, and her husband drew her attention

to something else.

About twelve that night Dr. Bob was again with her, and Mabel was fighting the battle of life and death. Bravely she fought it, and when the morning sunlight streamed into the room, it showed her lying quietly asleep, and by her side

lay a great big boy.

She was not informed of the sex of the child until it was nearly twenty-four hours old, and then when Max told her with pride in his voice that she had borne him a son, her astonishment was ludicrous. "Oh," she said, "how disappointed Leah will be! She was always so very fond of little dolls of girls, she will never be satisfied with that great fellow. How I love him, and how proud you are, Max. I could hear it in your voice what satisfaction it gave you to have a son. Yet you never once said to me you wanted a boy!"

"You were so dead sure of a daughter, you know, Mabel," Max made answer with a smile curling his lips; "you put your faith in fortunetellers, and now see what they have done for you; but you seem to be as well satisfied as I am that

they made a mistake."

"I am just as proud of him as you are, Max. I only wanted a daughter for Leah's sake. Imagine me going about leaning on the arm of my son when he's a grown-up man! How I love him, Max, and how good God is to let us taste this sweet joy! I am so happy, Max, and if Leah were here, I wouldn't have a wish unfulfilled. What can be keeping her? Tell me, Max, is she in trouble of any kind or ill? Dr. Bob gets pale and trembles when I mention her name; tell me, is anything wrong with my Leah?"

"Yes, dear," said Max, judging it well to tell her a little, "there is something wrong with her, something is keeping her away from you now, but she will be with you as soon as she can, and you must have patience and ask no more questions for a few days at least. She is well, and will be with you soon; let that satisfy you."

At Max's request, Dr. Bob wired Leah at once of the birth of the child and received the reply:

"Will be with you soon."

Two days after the Governor's funeral, his widow lingered by his grave and prayed and wept until the evening shadows began to fall, and thus missed getting Dr. Bob's telegram until late

in the evening.

"I must go to her at once," she said to old George, to whom she had imparted the news, "and you must take me to the station to catch the earliest train, George, and I shall take no one with me, not even my maid. I will reach Philadelphia some time to-morrow afternoon and can drive alone to my old home. My servants there will take care of me. The trunks you can ship when I send for them and the maid can come with them. This house will be left in your charge until I return, which will be very soon."

So she had gone, and when she got off the train in Philadelphia, she almost fell into the arms of Dr. Traynell, who was seeing a friend off in

the car ahead.

"Leah!" he ejaculated, "and all alone. Come with me to my carriage and I will drive you to the Stanhopes. That's about where you are bound for, isn't it?"

"Not at once," said Leah. "I must stop off at my own home first, for a few moments, to remove the stains of travel, and then I will hasten to my dear Mabel, who is so happy while I am so miserable."

She wept silently behind her crepe veil, and when the doctor had helped her into the carriage and taken a seat beside her, she sobbed audibly.

"I will draw the curtain," he said, "and you may weep yourself out, you poor thing. You have my full sympathy in your sad, sad trouble, believe me!"

To the coachman he gave the sign with which the latter was evidently familiar; then he drew a flask from his pocket, and the next minute Leah was lying back in her seat, unconscious, while the doctor leaned well out of the carriage to inhale the fresh air.

The coachman, in accordance with the directions he had received made straight for his master's house, and when he had halted there, he could not help observing that he was not asked to assist in carrying the sick lady into the parlor. It was to the third story the unconscious woman was taken and there laid carefully on the bed in a strange looking room, to which light was admitted by means of a high skylight. The walls were padded, and the heavy door, with an iron grating, opened into a corridor that went around three sides of the apartment.

The latter was fitted up as a bedroom, one corner being curtained off to serve as a bath room

and dressing room.

The doctor carefully unpinned Leah's veil, put a carafe of water within her reach and left her.

And when she recovered her senses the last rays of the departing sun were reflected on the metal mirror that was fastened to the wall in front of her. She sat up and wondered how she came there. Was she awake, or only dreaming? She felt very thirsty and drank water from the bottle before her, seeing no vessel about into which she could pour it. Then she came to full recollection, and immediately the fact flashed upon her that she was in the power of Dr. Traynell.

He had met her at the train, she had foolishly stepped into his carriage, and the pungent odor of which she had been for a moment conscious, was doubtless some stupefying drug that had done its work but too well.

Her eyes flashed and her little fists clenched themselves as she thought of this new indignity she had received at his hands; and had the doctor come into her presence at that moment, the water bottle and his head would have come into

contact, of a surety.

She got up, walked about the room, and presently realized the hopelessness of her position, there, in the doctor's house, most probably, with none of her friends aware of her departure from home and her arrival in Philadelphia. How foolish she had been not to telegraph Max or Dr. Bob, or her butler even, by what train she was coming. And old George at the other end would wait patiently until he heard from her what to do with her trunks and maid.

If Dr. Traynell chose to keep her there for weeks a prisoner, which she knew she was, for she had tried the door and found it barred, he could do so without any one knowing that she had disappeared. True, she had wired Dr. Bob, "Will be with you soon" but that was not very definite; and he, too, would sit down and fold his hands patiently while she was here at the mercy of Traynell; and should he or the Stanhopes discover by some lucky chance that she had left home, they would never suspect him of foul play now that he was friendly with them all again.

Why had he done this thing? What was his present scheme with regard to her? Too well she foresaw it. Again she was a widow, and again he

would offer himself to her in marriage.

Had she anything with which to kill him, the loathsome reptile, anything with which to defend herself in case he attempted force with her?

Yes, she had the long pins that fastened on her veil; but when she looked for them, she found that they had been most carefully removed, as had also the ornament, a jet handled dagger, that she had thrust through her hair.

Was there anything in the room she could use as a weapon? She looked. There was nothing but the water bottle that could be moved, and something told her that that would be taken away

as soon as she slept.

She felt so utterly alone and helpless, Godforsaken. She who had been only a few days ago a petted darling whose every wish was gratified, sometimes before it was uttered, happy with her husband in her own beautiful home, was now a lonely, miserable widow, and a prisoner in the hands of her enemy in a room which had been, she had no doubt about it, at one time or other, the abode of the insane; else why the unusual solidity of its appurtenances, the iron grating, the padded walls? Was she really in the doctor's own home in the heart of the city, or had he taken her to some private asylum on the outskirts? No; she was in the centre of the city. She could hear, though faintly, the noise of traffic, the gongs of the street cars at short intervals, the church bells, and the chimes from a clock tower. She was in the doctor's house near St. George's Hall.

What would he say to her when he showed his hateful face at the grating? Was it his intention to starve her into submission? The pangs of

hunger now assailed her.

No, she would not be starved, for there was food being pushed through a slit under the grating, a waiter full of good things was being slid on to a marble shelf near the door, by a black hand, which was withdrawn as soon as the waiter had come to a resting place. She could not see the body to which the hand belonged, it was either stooped below the grating or standing beside the door, not in front of it.

"Are you a man or a woman?" Leah asked

cautiously.

"Eat yo' suppah, chile," was the reply she received, "an' don't bothar yo'se'f about me. De lickrish light'll flash out soon's it's dark enough. an' I'll push you in a night gown soon's I kin."

The voice was the voice of a negress, which She might be able to buy her gave Leah hope. way out of this place, but when she came to look for her pocket-book, she found that the hand bag in which she had carried it was not in the room. and when she examined the secret pocket in her petticoat into which she had thrust a roll of money before leaving home, she discovered that it also had been picked; her watch was gone, the rings had disappeared from her fingers, the brooch from her neck. For the first time Leah gave way to despair, as the full knowledge of the doctor's fiendish cruelty burst upon her.

She was no longer hungry. The food on the waiter remained untouched through the night.

The light appeared as the negress had said it would, and she lay on the bed staring up at it in

speechless misery.

Presently her eyes closed and she slept, and sweet visions came to her of green fields and limpid waters, of voluptuous banquets, of music and mirth. She awoke toward morning, stiff and uncomfortable, for she had not disrobed.

As she glanced toward the door she saw that a house wrapper of some soft white material was lying on the floor near it, together with a complete change of underwear, a pair of slippers and a

cambric night dress.

She arose, took a bath and made herself comfortable in the garments which were all new but a trifle too large for her. While she was in the bath she heard a noise at the grating, and peeping through the curtains, saw, pulling out the waiter, the same black hand that had pushed it in the night before; and in a few minutes another waiter made its appearance on which was a steaming, appetizing breakfast, of which she ate up every crumb when she had finished her toilet,

Greatly refreshed, she sat down in a bamboo chair to await events.

She wondered if there was any possible way

of escape from this room.

She had spent much time in her gymnasium and was posted in all kinds of athletics, could jump, climb, swing, and what not? Could she by any manner of means reach that skylight above her? Her eyes were measuring the distance, when she became aware of the doctor's square form at the grating and of his evil eyes peering in at her.

"Good-morning," he said with a leer; "how do

you feel this morning?"

Leah looked wrathfully at him. "Coward!" she said. "Villain, why have you brought me here?"

"To make you my wife, my dear," answered the doctor. "By fair means, if possible; the other

way, if you will have it so."

"What do you mean by the other way?"

"Drug you, hypnotize you—anything to make you say 'yes' before a minister, to make you legally mine. You are very beautiful still, Leah, and I love you. Fate played into my hands yesterday when it sent me to the depot to see a friend off on a journey and there gave you into my arms. I had you for a long time pressed close to my heart, Leah, here in this room. Be mine! Be my wife! You will learn to love me. Promise to marry me and I give you your freedom; refuse, and you stay here with me in my home-in this room, where I can come to you whenever I am so minded and spend hours with you. You shall never leave it except as my wife."

"And do you think for a moment that you can do all that, Dr. Traynell—that my friends will not

move heaven and earth to find me?"

The doctor laughed. "In some way you must have come here without notifying your friends of your intention, for there has as yet been no outcry over your disappearance, and when I called on Dr. Bob last night, after you had been five hours with me, he told me you would come to Philadelphia soon. This morning I shall call at the Stanhopes to see their fine boy-"

"What!" Leah interrupted him. "Their fine

boy? Is Mabel's child a boy?"

'Yes, a fine big boy, and she was continually prating of the little daughter she was expecting. Ha! ha!"

"And is my dear Mabel well?"

"'Mother and child both doing well,' is what

Dr. Bob reports."

"Oh, if I only could see Mabel and her little one!" and she made an appealing gesture to Dr. Traynell, and tears coursed down her cheeks.

"Don't cry, Leah," he said, "you may go to see her and the baby in a few hours if you say the

word."

"If I say the word that makes me your wife, monster! Hideous reptile! But that word will never be spoken if you keep me here for a lifetime. I hate you, do you hear me, hate you! and if you were in my reach would strangle the life out of you, you dastardly fiend! You do well to keep the grating between us! You manly drugger of helpless women, you do well to keep the

grating between us when I am not under the power of your poisons! But you will be punished. My friends will find me, and then, Dr. Travnell, beware! Beware, I say, for you will be torn limb from limb if Dr. Bob and Max Stanhope find out that you have but injured a hair of my head!"

"You are ranting, Leah. A few days up here will bend you to my will. I wish to marry you.

I have no desire to injure you."

"Will you give me some books to read to while

away the tedium of the hours?"

"You will find some in the closet to your right, on the top shelf. Touch the middle clotheshook below what you think is the ceiling of the closet. It conceals the spring that holds down the roll top of a bookcase. By touching another spring in the surbase—it looks like a little brass nail-you may pull out a stepladder on which you can stand to reach the case."

"How ingeniously is everything constructed in your house, Dr. Traynell!" Leah sneered. "Pray, who was the former occupant of this room?"

"My mother," said Dr. Traynell, "and she died here. Good-bye, till I see you again." And he was gone.

Leah allowed no time to elapse before she in-

vestigated the closet.

She had opened the door of it the previous evening and had supposed it to be an ordinary wardrobe closet, with its rows of hooks, and nothing more. The idea of a ladder of any kind gave her hope, but when she touched the nail-spring in the washboard and gave it a pull she brought out a

folding-ladder arrangement so fastened to the wall that it could not be removed from the closet.

She would see what the bookcase contained. When she touched the hook-spring and the top rolled back it disclosed three narrow shelves filled with small but choice books, and in one corner a small ebony box, which upon examination proved to be a small writing-desk. She sat on the top of the ladder and took down every volume, ran over its pages, turned it upside down and inside out, hoping to find something, she knew not what, that might suggest a means of escape from this place. She reasoned that if she could reach the skylight or even throw something through it, she might accomplish something toward her delivery. if she could climb up and out, or if she could break the glass and throw out a letter to be picked

up by some passer-by?

A pencil might be concealed in one of the volumes, the flyleaf would do for the message—or a pen—but search as she might, she could find nothing to write with, not even a match stick, a toothpick, or pin—nothing wherewith to scribble a message to her friends. What could she do? In the absence of anything to prick her finger with, could she draw blood with her teeth? Yes, she could bite off the whole top of her finger if necessary and write with the bloody stump in order to get helped out of this place, but that would be revolting. Yet there was a sick thrill at her heart whenever she thought of herself as helpless, unconscious, before Dr. Traynell. Anything rather than that!

She felt all along the shelves and behind the

books, and was just giving up in despair when something wrapped itself about her hand. Was it a cobweb? No, it was too strong. She turned her hand a few times and brought it to the light. It was a piece of white thread, the other end of which was apparently held fast, and by moving her finger along the entire length she discovered in a knot hole below the edge of the top shelf a spool of white cotton.

To pry it out was the work of ! moment, and carefully winding up the thread again, she put back her treasure trove into its hiding place. She would know where to find it when she needed it

and there it would be safe.

If they would only bring her with her next meal food that should be eaten with a knife and fork! With a knife she could manage to cut herself or with the fork jab her hand, and by sucking it keep the wound open and write with her blood.

So far there had been none on the waiter: all she was allowed was a spoon, which was dulledged and of silver, and, moreover, the dishes

and the very waiter were all of silver.

With one of the heavy silver cups she could make a hole in the skylight, could she be sure she was not being watched the whole time that the waiter was with her. The black hand removed it the moment she was through eating, and she felt certain that if she kept anything from it it would be instantly demanded, and if she refused to give it up the drug would come into play again—the drug she so dreaded.

No, she must not take anything from the wait-

er, and what she contemplated doing must be done at night when the negress was off guard.

Selecting a few books, she got down from her perch and seated herself again in the white patent rocker.

Read she could not, though the book was held open in her hand before her. Her thoughts traveled back to the warning against Dr. Traynell contained in Ralph's letter. Why had she not heeded it? Why had she not obeyed him? This last thought opened up another train of ideas, and she got up and paced up and down her prison chamber in every direction till the evening sun again showed red beams in the mirror and Dr. Travnell stood once more before the grating.

"Good-evening, my love," he said, smiling maliciously. "I have been to see the Stanhopes today and some of your other friends, and they all rest under the blissfull assurance that you are safe, if not happy, in your home in the West. expected to see a full account of the disappearance of Governor Fourfield's widow in the papers before this and a big fuss made about it. I judge by that that your people at the other end are simply waiting till they hear from you, and those who are at this end believe you still there. Fortune has been kind to me, you see, and if you will only marry me I will be the happiest man on all the earth, and you will be free to go to Mabel Stanhope and see her and Max make fools of themselves over the wonderful boy. He is a fine fellow---"

"Whom does he resemble?" Leah asked eagerly, "Max or Mabel?"

"He is the image of Max," the doctor said. "He cannot deny him."

"And Mabel, you say, is doing well?"

"Yes—looks very white and fragile, but she's all right. Her greatest desire is to show you her son."

"And oh, how I long to see him!" sighed Leah.
"They are going to tell her in a day or two of the death of your husband," the doctor went on.

"She does not know it yet."

"Oh, how it will shock her and grieve her, my poor little Mabel," and she spoke no further. A thought had come into her mind, bringing with it a feeling of hope. "Dr. Traynell," she said presently, "will you not be generous and manly, and set me free? You were once the intimate friend of Ralph Wentworth. You must at one time have been a good man to draw forth his love and respect. Be my friend. Give up the idea of making me your wife, and let me go free, and I will bless you forever. Set me free!"

"I cannot, Leah," the reply came quickly. "I love you. It makes me so happy to have you here in this house with me, even though you are not my wife—here, where I can feast my eyes on your beauty every hour of the day if I am so minded—or at night. Conscious or unconscious, you will be mine. No one will ever dream of your being here, even after the fact of your disappearance is made plain. How can they connect me with it? And you will be here for years, perhaps, if you continue stubborn—here with me, in my own

home, my wife in all but name."

Leah said nothing more. She knew that all ar-

guments would be vain, all threats fail.

She would wait until Mabel was told of the Governor's death, and in the meanwhile would think and ponder and scheme to escape.

"Dr. Traynell," she said, after a long silence, "this room was very warm last night. Could

you not give a little better ventilation?"

"Yes," he said at once. "That skylight can be raised a few inches and the windows in the corridor left open to give you a draught. If necessary, I can set the fans going in the corridor, but

it is scarcely hot enough for that yet."

A picture of the front of the doctor's house came into Leah's mind while he was speaking. In the third story there were two windows, with a very wide space of brick wall between, while the second floor was pierced with three windows, and the first held a wide-arched doorway, with a window at each side of it.

The skylight she knew now to be a portion of the old-fashioned slanting roof resting on that bare section of wall. Anything she could throw through it or push past it at the front end would fall on the pavement in front of the house. The two windows in the third story must be at the front end of the well-lighted corridor she could see through the grating, one at each side, intersecting the one that led past the door.

"What are you thinking about so seriously?" the doctor asked. He was now seated before the grating in a huge cushioned armchair which he had rolled there from across the corridor. "Have you any idea of escaping from this place? There

is no way of doing it except by this door, and it is so firmly set that the combined strength of a dozen men couldn't bulge it, and you are only a weak woman. The skylight opens upward; so, even if you could climb up that smooth, bare wall to reach it, you would fall out and break your pretty neck on the flags below. To get out on the roof is an impossibility; do not make the useless attempt. Come, Leah, be sensible! Be my wife and let me love you!"

"I will never be your wife," she said with energy, and turned the chair and her back on him.

He sighed and walked away slowly.

### XXX.

WHEN the negress brought her supper Leah made bold to approach her. "Which do you prefer—money or jewelry?" she asked.

"I likes de joolry de best, of cohse," she replied, "but you ain't got none, chile. I knows

dat."

"How do you know it?"

"'Cause I was in heah wid de doctah when he done tuck off yo' watch, an' de dull lookin' black pin f'om yo' neck, an' dem gorjee-ous rings off yo' hands; likewise de knife an' ha'rpins f'om yo' ha'r, an de money f'om yo' pocket. Liked to had one o' dem rings! But he done lock up ev'ything in de big safe down in de awfiss, an' I guess I'll nevah see 'em no mo'. I always liked joolry, rings 'speshly."

"I can't give you a ring, but if I can give you something that sparkles like the rings will you bring me a lead pencil, a sheet of paper and an

envelope?"

The fat black face showed itself for the first time above the grating, with greed stamped on its every feature.

"What you gwine to do wid it?" she asked.

"Write a lettah or make yo' will?"

"Write a letter," said Leah.

"An' you want me to put it in de box fo' you, I 'spect, mum. Well, I could git you de writin' things, I s'pose, an' put de lettah in de box fo' you, too. Let's see de shiny things."

Leah took off one of her garters and showed

her the jeweled buckle on it.

"Oh, um," said the negress, "he done fo'got yo' laigs! I'll bring you de writin' things; an' say, you'll want a post stamp, too, won't you? Lettahs don't go widout no post stamps. Gimme de two garters, an' I'll git you de things an' put de lettah in de box faithful, an' not read it myse'f or hand it to de doctah. 'Clar to gracious I won't hand it to the doctah! But I can't git 'em fo' you to-night, chile, or all day to-morrah, but de nex' night I kin bring 'em, 'cause den de doctah'll be gone to de lodge, an' I'll be heah all alone by myse'f. He's mighty shahp, dat doctah. Watches 'round like any ole cat, goes out an' comes in on you onexpected all de time; but when he do go to de lodge he stays thar fo' hours, an' he can't watch you an' jump on you. Lemme look at 'em again. Um, um, de pooty things!" as Leah held both garters up to view.

When the baby was four days old Max judged that he might break the news of Governor Fourfield's sudden death to his wife. He had been leading up to it cautiously all along, but yet it was a terrible shock to Mabel when she heard the full particulars.

"And Leah is there all alone!" she exclaimed when Max had finished. "Alone in her dreadful,

dreadful sorrow. She will kill herself-that's what she will do. You must go at once, Max, and bring her to me, my poor, poor Leah. She will come with you, though she wouldn't with Dr. Bob. You must not fear to leave me. It will hurt me more to know of her being there all alone among strangers than to do without you for two days. Go, go, my dear husband. Dr. Bob will take care of me, and I have the best of nurses. It will kill me if you don't go and bring Leah!"

So Max went on Friday night with the 9.30

train.

They looked at him in amazement when he arrived at the Fourfield residence and asked for the lady of the house. Old George came forward directly. "Why, sir," he said, "my mistress left here on Tuesday night on the owl train for Philadelphia. I saw her off myself, sir. She insisted on going all alone—wouldn't even take her maid with her, and wouldn't let me telegraph to you she was coming, though I suggested it to her, sir, at the depot. Where is my beautiful mistress? God! Oh, God, what has happened to her!" and the old man wrung his hands piteously.

Max was stunned, speechless. Leah not there! Gone to Philadelphia on Tuesday, and this was Saturday, and they had neither seen nor heard

anything of her!

He immediately wired to Dr. Bob: "Search for Leah. She left here Tuesday night for Philadelphia. I return by next train." And he took the next express East after promising to let the old man hear from him as soon as possible. That something wrong had happened her he felt certain, and he was nearly distracted.

At Broad Street Station Max found Dr. Bob waiting for him. "She is not here," the latter called out to him before he had his foot off the platform. "They know nothing of her at her own home, and I have hunted up every likely place I could think of. Great God! where is she?'

Max could not answer. His great heart was crushed and a shudder shook his frame. two must find her," he said. "We will not call in the police until it is absolutely necessary. Come

home with me. Mabel must be told."

His wife took the terrible news quietly. "Leah," she said, "is in this city, in a house that has a wide space of brick wall between two upper floor windows. Ralph appeared to me before my baby was born and showed me the house in a picture. Let me think, let me think. Where did I see that house before? It is familiar to me, and so is that house with the colonnade front on the same street with it; but where is it? Whose house could it be?"

She cudgeled her brain to locate that house, but up to a late hour Sunday night had not suc-

ceeded in doing so.

Monday morning Dr. Traynell dropped in to pay her a friendly visit. "Max! Max!" cried Mabel as soon as he was gone, "the house of my dream is Dr. Traynell's, and the other building is old St. George's Hall! Leah is with him! Put on your hat and run and tell Dr. Russell to search Dr. Traynell's house for Leah till he finds her.

Let him do it, for you, darling, must come back to me."

Max did as she bid him, though he had no faith in her dream.

He found the doctor about to open a letter which a painter had brought him, and waited.

The envelope Dr. Bob was scrutinizing bore his address, and in one corner the statement: "Dr. Robert Russell will give the person who takes this letter to him fifty dellars."

letter to him fifty dollars."

He opened it slowly, and could not repress a veritable shout when he read the first line. With evident emotion he perused it to the end, when, turning to a drawer in his desk, he took out a wallet and counted out fifty dollars to the man who stood waiting.

The latter could scarce believe his eyes, and left the office with a hearty "Thank you, sir."

"Here, Max, read this," the doctor gasped, and thereupon opened his pistol case, took out the weapon it contained, shoved it into his pocket, stepped into the gymnasium for a coil of rope and a walking cane, and put on his hat. "I am going," he said, "for Leah. You go back to your wife and show her that letter. You need not come with me. The letter, tied to a hairbrush, struck that man on the head this morning, he told me, as he was standing on a scaffold painting the windows of Dr. Traynell's house in the second story. I will call on him if I need any help."

The letter was as follows:

"I, Leah Fourfield, am a prisoner in the house of Dr. Traynell, near St. George's Hall, on the

third floor, in the room between the windows. I arrived at Broad Street Station Wednesday afternoon, and Dr. Traynell, who happened to be seeing off a friend in the car ahead, saw me and offered to take me home in his carriage. I accepted, and we drove down Fifteenth street, but just before we reached Walnut he drugged me, drove back and brought me into this house unconscious. Thursday night I bribed the doctor's negress to bring me these writing materials. She did so on Friday night, and I will throw this letter through the skylight as soon as I can find a way and a good opportunity. I pray God it may get into your hands and that you will rescue me; but do it quietly to avoid a scandal. Leah."

"I knew it," said Mabel, when Max had read her the letter, "and Dr. Bob will be here with her directly. Tell the housekeeper to have a good cup of tea made ready. The poor thing will need it."

Dr. Bob saw through the glass door that Dr. Traynell was alone in his office bending over some object that lay before him on the table. It was the picture of Leah enameled inside her watchcase.

He took an end of the rope he carried in one hand, the cane in the other, and stepping quickly inside, gave Dr. Traynell a terrific cut on the face, slipped a noose around his neck and pulled him from his chair to the floor. Dazed and half-strangled, Traynell was easy to overpower, and in the twinkling of an eye his hands were tied behind his back. "Now, scoundrel," said Dr.

Bob, "take me to the third story and open the door of Leah's prison. Don't speak or I'll ram my fist down your throat.

Dr. Traynell glared at his captor and wouldn't

budge.

"You won't, eh?" said Robert Russell. "Maybe this will goad you," and he gave him some stinging blows with the cane across the head and shoulders.

Dr. Traynell did not move. "You may kill me," he said, "but you'll never get Leah from me alive."

"We'll see about that," said Dr. Bob, drawing his revolver. "You're a brave man, I know, a very brave man, but you can't look into the tube of a revolver in my hand without flinching. Now,

move on, I say."

Dr. Traynell rose to his feet and walked on ahead up to the third floor, to the door with the grating. "Leah," he said, "I have brought Dr. Bob here to liberate you; but before you leave this room take down the ebony writing-desk, touch the little knob under the empty inkwell, and you will find the jewelry I took from you on the day I brought you here. If you will untie my hands, Dr. Bob, I will show you how to open this door. It has a secret spring as well as the bars to fasten it."

"Point out the spring to me, you hell hound, or I'll blow off the top of your head; and you, Leah, let that ebony writing-desk alone. This wretch lies. Your watch is downstairs on his office desk."

"And the other jewelry is in the safe," Leah finished. "Keep him bound, Dr. Bob, and out

there with you until I have changed my dress; and when I go out of this room we'll push him into it, and he may stay here until the negress and the coachman, who are now out marketing, think of coming up here, which will not be until it is time for luncheon. I will be ready in a moment."

It was now Traynell's turn to experience the power of brute force, and in obedience to the last threat from Dr. Russell he put the toe of his shoe to a groove in the door near the bottom. A spring clicked, the door flew open, Leah stepped into the corridor, and Dr. Traynell was pushed unceremoniously into the padded chamber, the door closed again and barred.

## XXXI.

WITH Mabel's baby on her lap, every now and then stooping to kiss him, Leah related to her three friends the particulars of her abduction as

far as we know them, and continued:

"On Friday night, after I had written the letter, I worried my brain for some way of getting it past that skylight, out into the street, and not until Monday morning, while I was lying in bed, did the thought occur to me that the metal poles that held up the long curtain across the dressingroom might be unscrewed from their sockets, the letter hoisted to the skylight, which was now raised a few inches, and pushed out. was to act. I jumped out of bed, hung my black dress across the grating so as to keep any one in the corridor from seeing me at work, balanced myself on the bamboo chair and began with the brass knobs that finished the poles. A few turns of my wrist and I had them off. The curtains I slid off next, and soon the two poles were lying at my feet on the floor. I took off the bolster case, wrapped it tightly around the poles where I wanted to join them, and tied it about so that they would stay together with a sixteen-strand cord I had twisted out of my precious spool of cotton. I knew now that I could loop a string to the letter,

hang it lightly to the end of the pole, push it past the skylight, and drop it; and while I was busy about it my eye lighted on the silver-backed hairbrush. 'There,' I thought, 'is the thing that will draw attention to my letter. People might not trouble themselves about a letter lying on the sidewalk, but not many would walk by a valuable silver hairbrush and not pick it up. So I fastened the letter to the brush and the brush to the end of the pole, raised it, pushed it past the skylight, gave it a little shake, and the brush and letter were gone."

"And they struck the head of a painter who was standing on a scaffold just below the second story ready to begin his day's work," the doctor chimed in, "and he brought them to me just as Max en-

tered my office."

"And I had gone there at Mabel's request," Max explained, "to tell you that she had recognized the house Ralph Wentworth showed her in her dream as Dr. Traynell's—the one facing St. George's Hall. He has an office farther out, you know. And bade me tell you to search in the third story behind that wide space of wall between the two windows. Little I thought that you had in your hands at that very moment the confirmation of the message I bore to you. Was it not strange that Leah should be hidden in that house in the very place Ralph pointed out to Mabel in the picture?"

"Ralph still watches over me," Leah said, thoughtfully, with tears in her eyes. "My good.

good Ralph."

Leah's trunks and her maid arrived in due time from Columbus, and again she was established

in her old quarters with Mabel.

A few friends were told of her presence in the city, but no word was given of her detention by Dr. Traynell. That gentleman's house was closed.

He had left the city.

Here, with her friends, with plenty to occupy her mind and that precious baby to fondle, Leah's grief for the loss of the Governor grew less and less, and gradually that year spent with him became as a pleasant dream, and his death as a faint, sad memory.

The many shocks she had received in such rapid succession had told upon her nervous system, but under Dr. Bob's treatment she gradually became

her old self again.

For July and August she went with Max and Mabel to the seashore, to Atlantic City, where they spent those hot months quietly at the Stan-

hope cottage.

To them would come on Saturdays Dr. Bob and Willie Hapnett, who was studying up for his graduating term in the law at the University of Pennsylvania. His studying might all have been done at the cool seashore had he not wished to be as near as possible to Miss Gracie, who was now his betrothed, and she was tied fast to the bedside of her brother, the botanist, who had inflammatory rheumatism and couldn't be moved.

Young Hapnett and Miss Gracie would be married as soon as the former had graduated in the law-"with honor," his father stipulatedotherwise the marriage would be delayed; and

# 226 Leave Me My Honor.

Willie was working very hard and "perspiring over it," he told Leah when he came down for the breath of fresh air which his father insisted on his having for at least two days of each week for the benefit of his health.

So he was the weekly companion of Dr. Russell—whom he liked exceedingly well now that he knew he had no designs on Dora—to the Stanhope cottage, and went back with him on Monday morning.

#### XXXII.

THREE days after Leah's return to Philadelphia

she received a letter from Dr. Traynell.

She took it unopened to Dr. Bob. "What is he up to, I wonder?" he remarked, as he carefully opened it.

Leah read with him over his shoulder:

"DEAR LEAH: - When this reaches you I shall be dead. You are lost to me, and I care not to live longer. I meant for you to die, too, when I told you your jewels were in the little ebony desk. Had you touched the knob under the empty inkwell the room would have been instantly filled with a pungent perfume, which, if you had inhaled it, would have killed you. It was placed in the little desk by me long before I knew you, and I had forgotten all about it; but when I stood before the grating, bound and powerless, I thought of it, and would fain have killed youkilled you, Leah, and killed myself. Fate interfered, however, and I go alone to that bourne whence no traveler ever returns. In my will I have given you all I possess. Do what you please with it. You will find the document in my safe it is not locked—together with my mother's diary, which, if you care to read it, will give you the history of that padded room. Burn it when you are

through with it.

"I am sitting now in my office, with your dear, smiling face looking up at me, and I am ready to die. When I have addressed this to you I will drop it into the letter-box, come back here and sit down again-and to-morrow morning they will find me stark and stiff, sitting in my chair, with your picture in my hand. I have loved you well. Good-bve."

Leah wondered if he thought to lure her back to his house by this means. What did she care for his will or his mother's diary and the history of the padded room? She was out of the latter, thank God! and she cared to know nothing further about it.

Dr. Bob, after pondering over the letter, decided to go to the ill-omened house and find out what it really meant. But first he would invite a chemist and some prominent physicians who were intimate with Dr. Traynell to accompany him.

To Leah he said before he went: "I think that he has killed himself and that whoever, without proper precaution, removes the will and diary from the safe will be killed also. The doctor is a professor of chemistry, and holds a chemical secret of great value to the medical world. He has a drug, the composition of which he keeps to himself, that is more effective than chloroform, ether, nitrous oxide, or any of the usual anaesthetics, and it leaves no bad after-effects. You were not ill or weak after you came to, were you?"

"No," Leah answered. "I felt very well-stim-

ulated, in fact, as if I had taken a tonic."

"That is it. He used on you the drug he is in the habit of giving to the patients in his clinic whenever he himself performs a surgical operation or wishes to deaden pain. The students and doctors who know him are eager to get this secret from him, but he will not tell; he will not give it to the world, because, he says, the slightest carelessness in the use of it will cause insanity, if not death. It is too dangerous a commodity to put upon the market. His grandfather, old Uriah Traynell—the alchemist, they call him—invented it "

So Dr. Bob, with two physicians, the chemist and half a dozen students arrived before Dr. Travnell's house an hour later, to find it closed and the blinds all down.

A ring at the doorbell brought no response, but when it had been repeated a clattering of footsteps was heard in the marble vestibule and the door was opened by Mima, the doctor's negress.

"Doctah ain't in, gemmen," she said in answer to the inquiry. "Done come in dis mawnin', but went out ag'in. Awfiss is closed, I reckon. No. 'tain't." as she tried the door of the outer office. "Come in. He's in de house somewhars when dat do' am onlocked."

The men came in and found everything in its usual order in the outer office and the door of the inner one ajar. Dr. Bob pushed it open, and there sat Dr. Traynell, gripping tightly the arms of his desk-chair, staring into vacancy, straight before him. On the floor lay Leah's watch, which the doctor quietly picked up, and on the desk stood an empty vial still emitting a faint perfume which the students at once recognized.

They opened wide the windows and doors and examined the doctor's condition more closely.

He was still alive, but to all appearance bereft of reason. When they shook him and asked him questions he jabbered. Dr. Bob for a moment held his eyes and said "Leah." Traynell replied "Safe," and that was the only distinct word he uttered. They pulled him to his feet to make him walk, but he could not—his lower limbs were paralyzed. So they rung for the ambulance and took him with them to the hospital, which he left only to be taken to the State Asylum for the Insane.

The day after they found him in that deplorable condition Dr. Bob and his party revisited the

house to get the will and the diary.

The negress, when told of the object of their call, declared that they "couldn't git into dat safe nohow. He done tuck off de ole lock what I knowed all about," she said, "an' put on a bran' new one to keep me out, 'cause I done fool wid sompin' he kep' in a milk jar. I was holdin' it up to de light an' a-onscrewin' de top when he cotch me at it, an' ebber sence I couldn't git in de safe no mo'. Didn' make no diff'ence to me. What I care 'bout a ole milk jar?"

Dr. Bob knew the safe to be unlocked and ordered every door and window on the first floor thrown open, and there was no one in the room when the door of the safe was pulled back by means of a rope that had been fastened to the knob and taken across the room and passed

through a window.

No odor came from the safe when it was open, but in one of the compartments could be seen the vial the negress had dubbed a milk jar, and across the top of it lay a black book marked with gold letters, "Diary," and a long, narrow, folded white

paper.

Dr. Bob pushed a clothes prop through the window and dislodged the book and paper, when there came the sound of fizzing, and the air was filled with perfume. The negress, whose curiosity made her press too close to the window, was overcome by it, and they laid her down on the grass plot until they had time to attend to her.

"I would give a thousand dollars for what is left in that jar," said one of the physicians presently. "And I two thousand," said another. "And I five thousand," the chemist offered. "It

hasn't half fizzed out yet."

But no one cared to venture near that jar or to have much to do with that drug. They had all seen Dr. Traynell, and they knew the effect of it on his brain. Death a doctor will ever brave, but

insanity is another proposition.

Out there in the garden they waited until the fizzing had stopped in the vial and the odor had all evaporated. Then, with a hook fastened to the end of a pole, Dr. Bob fished out the diary and dipped it into a vessel containing a spirituous liquid which the chemist, who was most anxious to get the jar, had made ready, and when the book was withdrawn the liquid was rebottled and he

slipped it into his pocket for future analysis. He hoped to get some knowledge of the Traynell anaesthetic from it, however slight it might be.

The diary Dr. Bob claimed for Leah, but he promised to share with those who were with him any interesting medical registry it might contain.

The negress regained consciousness, and when the safe door was tightly shut again the doctors searched the house, the laboratory included. Here they came upon a basket containing onion bulbs and two very fine specimens of the large red variety, and upon a tub the bottom of which was covered with withered grape leaves. "Pickles," suggested a student, and passed on. "Traynell's drug contained no inguns," another facetiously remarked. "'Twas sweetest perfume." But the chemist, who was behind them, took up the two onions and a handful of the grape leaves and pocketed them. The students laughed at him openly and the doctors shook their heads doubtingly, but when the chemist spied and pulled from under a metal mortar a mutilated yellow old prescription from which could be read, "Uvae folia, Cepae," they looked attentive and hazarded numberless wild conjectures as to what that meant that looked like the top of a "W," the only other character that could be seen on the mutilated pa-"Strange things happen nowadays," he observed quietly, as the paper went into his pocketbook. "If I can discover the old alchemist's secret by any means I shall be doing humanity a service greater than any yet accomplished."

"You are right," one of the physicians coin-"With that anaesthetic Dr. Traynell took cided.

into account neither youth, nor age, nor the physical condition of the body when performing a surgical operation, and he was always successful. He was selfish not to give the secret to the world, yet we know what it did for him."

The doctor regained the use of his limbs, but

his mind remained a blank to the last.

Leah and Mabel went to see him one day at the asylum. He looked long at Leah, but he did not know her, and she came away weeping at the sadness of his condition and the wreck he had made

of himself through love of her.

The diary contained only the history of a crime committed by his father, whose second wife, Dr. Traynell's mother, had married him unwillingly, it seems. She had been his ward—a beautiful girl, an heiress—and the old doctor, covetous alike of her beauty and money, couldn't think of allowing such a prize to escape him, even if, to accomplish his vile ends, he had to resort to foul means.

Drugs were easy. They were always within reach, and especially such as his father, Uriah Traynell, had prepared in his laboratory, which were as yet unknown, safe, not easily detected. By their means he first stupefied his ward, and when she became aware that she must be his wife and no other man's she submitted, and they were married.

She had known and loved a young lawyer, who had shot himself under the delusion that she had wantonly jilted him.

Grief over his death drove her to frenzy, and when her child was born she was already an inmate of the padded room her husband had fitted

up for her—a maniac.

She stayed in that room until she died, but when her boy was about twelve years old there came a lucid interval, and she learned to love her son, and spent many happy hours with him there, reading, studying and conversing, preferring that room to any she would be compelled to share with her husband.

She made no effort to conceal the hatred she felt for him, and he, though he still loved her, grew tired of her violent outbreaks whenever he attempted any familiarity, angered at the abhorrence she showed with such inflexible persistency, and one day took it into his mind to kill her. The sweet-smelling drug was employed in sufficient quantity to cause death, and by means of that ebony writing-desk, into the false bottom of which he had placed a small vial of it, so arranged that by touching the little knob under the inkwell his wife would not only release the little drawer that held her supply of notepaper, but would pull out the stopper of the vial that held the deadly drug.

It happened one day, when her son was spending a few days with a friend in a neighboring city, that she, wishing to write to him, opened the little drawer, and so met death. The boy had fondly loved his mother, and grieved sorely at her loss.

From his father, when the old man was on his deathbed, he learned of the drug that had killed her, together with the formula for its composition and the proper way to use it.

He resented the death of his mother by such means, but not sufficiently to make him lose inter-

1.16.

est in so powerful an adjunct to medical science as he recognized that drug to be. He was then

a young student of med cine.

The writing-desk he had idly examined one day when he had gone to the padded room for a book which he knew to be in the closet case, and without any particular purpose in his mind at the time had refilled the little vial and put it back in its place and the desk in the corner of the bookshelf where Leah had found it, and, as he stated in his letter, he did not think of it again until he wished to kill Leah rather than have her leave him.

What the chief idea in his mind had been when he penned that letter to Leah will never be known.

Whether he thought that she would be foolish enough to come for the will and diary, or that Dr. Bob, knowing the possibilities of the drug and being as anxious as the other doctors to get possession of some of it, might suspect something in the mention of the diary and go to the safe himself to get it, is mere presumption.

No more of the drug was found, nor any clue to its manufacture other than the chemist had in

his possession—if, indeed, that were a clue.

The ebony desk was opened in the garden and the little drawer pulled out very carefully, but none of the drug could be saved, much to the chagrin of the chemist, who had gone as close to it as he dared, and yet had failed even to detect the odor.

## XXXIII.

LEAH stayed all that winter in retirement with Max and Mabel. Twice they had gone to her home in Columbus with her for a few days, and once Willie Hapnett and his Aunt Sophie had accompanied her.

A feeling of delicacy caused Dr. Russell to remain away from the Stanhope mansion each time Leah had returned from one of these trips, until

she sent for him.

The first time she had kept him waiting three weeks for any sign that his presence to her would be welcome. This compulsory absence had chafed his spirit, but when at last he received her dainty little billet his eyes danced with joy.

Yet he must be careful. No expression must be given to the passion that consumed him for hours. days perhaps, after his glance had once more

rested on her. Leah was peculiar.

Quietly he greeted her when she advanced toward him in the parlor, and instead of pouring into her ears the story of his love and longing, he gave her interesting details of his life work and the pleasant social news he had gathered.

No kiss was exchanged at parting, but it took the utmost effort of Robert Russell's powerful will to restrain his hunger for one taste of the

sweet lips, his dearest delight.

The next day when he called he brought with him a bouquet of rare flowers. Leah was delighted with them and gave him a smile, but not yet would he ask for anything more. She would come to him of her own accord, lay her arm on his shoulder perhaps inviting an embrace, or, bliss ecstatic! suddenly put up her lips and so ask for a kiss. Ah, then heart should speak to heart! Neither of these hopes were realized during this call, but Mabel—good, kind friend that she was to him!—invited him that night to the snuggery. Willie and Miss Gracie would be there with them. Well, anything was liable to happen in that dear snuggery.

How could she be so calm and cool when with him? Did she love him? Yes, she loved him; he was sure of that. But could he keep her love? Oh, if only this long, cruel time of waiting were past! Once his wife, he would know how to keep her. His wife—Leah, the beautiful, whom all men worshiped. Might she not again escape him, as she had done before? Before, she had told him that love for him had died out of her heart; now it had revived. "You have my heart for all eternity," she had said to him. How he hugged that precious acknowledgment in his gloomy days!

"Leah is alone in the snuggery," Mabel whispered when he came that night. "You are early. Go right up."

He needed no further urging, but went two

steps at a time, yet softly.

He parted the curtains, and there sat Leah with her back to him, under the full blaze of the chandelier, holding open before her a large photo-

graph album. She was looking intently at the pictured face of a very handsome man whom she had met lately. With a sore pain at his heart Dr. Bob dropped the curtains and went back to Mabel. "Has she seen the Senator since the day Max introduced him to us?" he inquired, with lips and eyes that proclaimed the misery he felt. "She is taking in all the details of his handsome face now in the snuggery. She has him before her in your album. Ah, would that I were dead! I cannot remain here to-night. She-she loves me no longer. Let me go," he added, as Mabel laid a detaining hand on his arm. "I am so utterly miserable, so full of despair. I must be alone to fight it." And he went out and walked to his home, where he locked himself in and stormed and raged the night through.

The morning mail brought him these words:

"Come, at ten, to your Leah."

His Leah—yes, his, and no legion of senators should take her from him. Closely he examined his face in the mirror. He was not a vain man, but it gave him pleasure to know that the pale face there reflected would bear comparison with the pictured face Leah had gazed on.

She was looking a little pale, but flushed when she saw him. "Why did you go away again last night after you had come here?" she demanded

imperiously.

"Did not Mabel tell you?"

"No, she did not. I couldn't coax it out of

"Then I will not tell you either." Dr. Bob was thankful to Mabel, and fully recognized the wisdom of her silence. "Anything special this morning that you have sent for me so early?"

"Yes, speak out, only—"

"Only that I wanted you last night ever so badly, and you were not here, Robert Russell, and I had to write for you to come this morning." She molded her mouth to pensiveness.

"And now that I am here, Leah?"

She came close to him and laid her arm round his neck.

Dr. Bob was happy. Leah was his. Gone was all fear of the Senator, as she gave him assurance doubly and trebly, though mutely, that he,

Robert Russell, was king of her heart.

No more trouble did he experience until Leah went for the second time to Columbus. Senator Miller was then there, while he who was her affianced lover was eating his lonely heart out here in Philadelphia, all because people might talk if he had accompanied her. Would that year never come to an end?

He heard that Senator Miller had stepped into the carriage that held the Stanhopes and Leah, and been driven with them to the Fourfield residence.

Another volunteered the news that the Senator, who contemplated an extensive tour through the West, would stop a few days where he was before going any farther. "The widow seems to be the attraction," had been officiously added.

He wrote three or four miserable letters to Leah, read them over and hastily destroyed them,

gritted his teeth and endured to the end.

One morning as he was about to step into his carriage before the door of a patient, the Stanhope equipage passed him with them and Leah

in it on their way home.

How long would she keep him waiting this time, he wondered, before she would let him know that she was at home to him. One good thing, the Senator was on his way to the Far West by this time-but no, here he was, shaking hands with the politicians. What did it mean? Did Leah know that he had come East instead of going farther West?

For a week he kept track of the Senator, and knew that he had gone one evening to the Stanhopes' and staved three hours. Had he been closeted with Max all that time, or had he been entertained by the ladies? Would Leah at the eleventh hour change her mind and marry the Senator? She should not marry the Senator. He would kill her first! Kill Leah? Ah, no; he was not Dr. Traynell. She should live and marry whom she pleased. Her life must be all sunshine, Ralph had said. He would not be the one to mar any of its brightness.

In this frame of mind he went to bed, and when he got up the next morning, rather late,

there was a letter waiting for him.

"My dear Robert," it said, "I am going for a few days to Ridley Park, with Mabel and Max, to visit Senator Miller's mother. Will be back on Friday, when I hope to see you. Do not come till evening. Yours, LEAH."

Dr. Bob read it twice over. "That's a nice, cool little letter to get from the woman who has promised to marry you," he thought. "Hopes to see me on Friday! 'Do not come till evening!' I wonder what she calls 'evening' in this case—after dark or after dinner? Let me see. I have an engagement to dine with the Griscombes on Friday. Their niece from the South is still with them. A fine girl she is! I quite enjoyed my chat with her the other day. Any amount of 'go' in her, and stylish as they make 'em. Hem! I guess I won't break my engagement with them. I'll write Leah to that effect and see what comes of it. If she doesn't change 'evening' to 'morning' on Friday she loves me no longer, and I might as well take my defeat gracefully. I wonder how it would do to make her jealous? She would suffer, poor Leah, but not in silence. Well, a few pangs won't kill her. She doesn't say when she's going to Ridley Park. Could a special messenger catch her before she leaves? I'll risk it!"

He sat down at his desk, wrote rapidly for a few minutes, folded and directed his missive, and

sent it by a special to Leah.

She tore it open, devoured its contents, said "No answer," and went back to her room to think. "Has an engagement for Friday evening, indeed! With the Griscombes. She is there yet, I presume!"

Long she sat thinking. Then she went to Mabel and coaxed her to come with her to Dr. Bob's office.

He was very busy that morning. They had to wait until he could get rid of some of his patients. His heart sang with joy when he caught the first gleam of Leah's eyes. He had always hated to see that tiger look on her, but to-day he was glad it was there. She loved him still. Oh, happy thought! She was jealous—furiously jealous—of him.

At last he was free, and he turned to her inquiringly. Mabel walked into the outer office to examine more closely the doctor's gristly anatomical specimens, and left them alone together.

"Now, then," said the doctor encouragingly.

"I want you to give up your dinner engagement on Friday evening and come to me," Leah ordered excitedly.

"Couldn't think of it," the doctor replied, twirling his thumbs. "Thought you were going to

Ridley Park to-day."

"So I am, but not until the 5.40. I will be back early on Friday, and Mabel wants you to take dinner with us."

"Sorry to refuse her and you, but I accepted Mrs. Griscombe's invitation before I knew of

your return two weeks ago."

"Accepted it to meet her Southern niece again," Leah said slowly. "She is a charming young lady, Max tells me—very popular with the gentlemen."

Dr. Bob smiled and softly rubbed his hands together. She was furious. Her eyes were blazing. In a minute she would strike him—or kiss him.

"You are laughing at me," she said, standing before him. "Laughing—at—me." And all at once she put her hands to her eyes and broke down completely. "No one was ever angry at

me or laughed at me but you," she moaned wretchedly, and such bitter sobs broke from her as Dr. Bob hoped nevermore to hear from her. They seemed to be tearing her heart. He tried his best to soothe her, but she would not be comforted.

"Leah," said Dr. Bob, "will you not forgive ne?"

"You laughed at me," she replied bitterly, taking up her gloves. "We must hurry, Mabel, or we'll not make that train. Good-bye, Dr. Russell."

"Will you see me on Friday if I call on you?"

he asked.

"Yes, but it would be foolish for you to break any engagement. You are nothing to me, Dr. Bob, any longer," and out she walked with the

air of an empress.

She spoke no word to Mabel on the way home, but when they arrived there she told her that they would not go to Ridley Park that day. She felt weak and sick, and would retire to her bed at once, which she did, and never got out of it again for nearly four weeks.

In all haste Dr. Bob was sent for when Leah woke up about ten o'clock that night wildly de-

lirious—and, oh, how she raved!

Dr. Bob stood over her, and the cold sweat of fear stood on his forehead as he held his thumb over her wrist. If this frenzy would but leave her her life, her precious life, might be saved.

Night and day he spent by her bedside, as he had done once before. But this time she was

weaker. Would she rally?

Mabel begged him to take some rest, but he would not hear of it until the crisis was passed.

Just before twelve o'clock that night she had thrown her arms above her head and sighed heavily. At last the lids closed over the eyes, the arms

dropped back on the pillow. Leah slept.

Leah did not see Dr. Bob until she was nearly well again. She was sitting up playing with Mabel's baby, laughing delightedly as he kicked about in her lap trying to grasp a bit of red ribbon she held out before him.

She started when she saw Dr. Bob, and she smiled at him, which he took for an indication that an embrace would not be unwelcome. Leah made no attempt to withdraw from his arms, but turned her cheek to him when he would have kissed her lips. "I am glad to see you, Dr. Bob," she said gently, "and grateful for all your kindness and care, but I would like you to take your ring from my finger. It has no longer any signifi-

cance. I wish to be free again."

"Leah, do not give me up until you hear my defence. I was nearly crazy, my darling, when I saw you looking at Senator Miller's picture that night when I would not stay at Mabel's, and I heard that Senator Miller had followed you East: that he spent three hours here in this house where you were, and then I received your cool letterthe coldest you have ever sent me. I was frantic. I saw myself again thrown aside for another man as you threw me aside for the Governor. I was mortally jealous of the Senator. Then I wanted to test your love. If it were still mine I knew that you would come to me and forbid me to go to that dinner. I had not the slightest intention of going to it. My letter of acceptance to Mrs. Griscombe held a proviso. And my happiness was so great that I laughed with the joy of it when you made known to me that Max told you of my chat with Miss Griscombe in front of the Post Office. That explained to me the coolness of your letter. I was happy, because now I knew that you loved me. It made me glad—so glad!—that you were jealous. Let me take this great boy to the nursery, and then, Leah, you will come back to my heart."

He took up the baby, set him on his shoulder, and carried him to his mother with a flush on his face and an eager, happy light in his eyes, for he had seen that in Leah's face, when he had stooped to take the baby, that had sent the blood to his head and made him giddy with hope and joy.

The wedding was a quiet one. The ceremony was performed by the rector of the church to which they belonged, in Mabel's magnificent suite of parlors, which were handsomely decorated for the occasion with roses and magnolias.

After the wedding Dr. and Mrs. Russell took a trip to Europe, and when they returned they occupied Dr. Bob's handsome West Walnut street residence.

To please Leah he gave up his practice and devoted himself to her exclusively.

And in due time Mabel took Max the news that to Leah had come a doll of a daughter.

Six months later they were in Max's den, smok-

ing, he and Dr. Bob. "Why is it," Max said, in a puzzled way, "that so many marriages in high life turn out so unhappily? On the part of the man there is satiety, on that of the woman a fretful jealousy; or, it happens that the woman gets tired and seeks a change and the man becomes a victim to the green-eyed monster. A man could not tire of a woman like Mabel or Leah, and, though

they are flirts, we have no need to worry."

"Innocent flirts," Dr. Bob retorted. "Last night, at the height of Judge Hapnett's reception, they seemed to have nothing at all on their minds, yet each was with difficulty managing a multipleduplex flirtation. I must confess that I am flustered occasionally when Leah meets a man of rare parts and ability—one who compels her interest. I am forgotten for the moment. Later, she compares us. It is then that I am anxious, and I wait: but soon there comes a gleam of the eye, a fleeting smile, the sweep of her skirts across my feet, and I long for a half hour's tête-à-tête with her. She is difficile—very chary of her favors. They must be sued for, but when at last her will bends itself to mine, it is rapture. I am the other with her in the Garden of Eden."

"They know well how to manage us," Max admitted, smiling. "They have our love, and they know how to keep it. We are never spoiled by over-indulgence. But what could be sweeter, more subtle flattery than the dainty touch of a palm on your sleeve or the flutter of a fan against you when you are one with her in a circle of admirers! I shall always and ever be Mabel's

lover."

Dr. Bob laughed softly to himself, dreamily. "Leah makes me supremely happy," he said. "I am blessed, yet I thank God that he gave me the power to resist her, the strength to send her that message: 'Leave me my honor.'"

THE END,

